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English statesmen



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BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

ENGLISH STATESMEN

PREPARED BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON



NEW YORK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

FOURTH AVE. AND 23D ST.

1876.



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## PREFACE.

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**T**HERE is no book in existence, so far as I know, through which an American can make the needful preliminary acquaintance with English statesmen, by way of preparation for attending or reading the Parliamentary debates. It is easy enough to find books which portray these men, and that with much wit and vigor ; but they are all written by Englishmen for Englishmen : they all include many details to which an American is indifferent, and they all omit or take for granted a great deal that an American wishes to know. In this volume the attempt has been made to condense several of these books into one, making them supply one another's deficiencies, and filling the gaps, if need be, from other sources still ; in the hope to produce something which, if no better than the rest in its ingredients, may at least be more useful to Americans through its arrangement.

The book is divided, for convenience, into three parts. The first of these includes sketches of six conspicuous men, already well-known in this country. The second includes as many of the minor Conservative leaders, members of the present Cabinet. The third includes the same number of Liberals, all of whom have heretofore held office. These pages, therefore, do not delineate merely Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone, but their associates and their probable successors. Were this the only volume proposed, it should certainly include Professor Fawcett and Sir Charles Dilke also, as representative men ; but as the line must be drawn somewhere, and as they have not yet held office, it seemed better to leave them to be described in the companion volume of "English Radical Leaders" now in preparation by Col. R. J. Hinton. This gentleman, being of English birth, and having always kept himself informed in regard to popular agitation in England, is peculiarly well fitted for the work he has undertaken. A volume of sketches of French statesmen will also follow, to be prepared by Edward King, Esq., whose admirable letters from Paris, during the Franco-Prussian War, afforded a guarantee of his special fitness for any such task. Other volumes are already planned and will appear as rapidly as circumstances may permit.

T. W. H.

NEWPORT, R. I. Feb. 26, 1875.



## MR. GLADSTONE.

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**T**HE *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1839, contained a brilliant article by Macaulay, based upon a book called "The State in its Relations with the Church." "The writer of this volume," said the critic, "is a young man of unblemished character and of distinguished parliamentary talents; the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories who follow, reluctantly and cautiously, a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor. It would not be at all strange," he adds, "if Mr. Gladstone were one of the most unpopular men in England."

Nearly thirty-six years have passed, since this passage was written. The hope of the stern and unbending Tories has for years been the unquestioned leader of English Liberals, and though he may have been, at times, as unpopular as Macaulay could have predicted, the hostility has come mainly from the ranks of those who were thus early named as his friends. But whatever may have been Mr. Gladstone's opinions or affiliations, whoever may have been his

friends or foes, the credit of surpassing ability has always been his. Even in 1839, the Chevalier Bunsen wrote of him, "Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power."

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

When an American, on visiting the House of Commons for the first time, studies with eagerness the face of the great Liberal statesman, his first impression must be, I should think, not so much "how fine! how intellectual!" as "how un-English! how American!" Mr. Disraeli himself, though far remoter from the prevailing English type, is hardly more distinctly separated from it than is Mr. Gladstone. The more highly charged nervous organization, the greater sensitiveness, the mobility, the subtlety of mind that we habitually attribute, with or without reason, to the American type,—these all are visible, at the very first glance, in him. For myself, on the only occasion when I had the honor of meeting Mr. Gladstone in his own house, I was haunted throughout the interview with an increasing resemblance to another face and voice, till at last it almost seemed that it was Ralph Waldo Emerson with whom I was talking.

"When Mr. Gladstone first entered the House of Commons, in the heyday of his youth," says an English writer, "his looks earned for him the sobriquet, which he preserved in effect for some years afterwards, of 'Handsome Gladstone.' The handsome looks are gone, but it is a noble face, for all that,—a far nobler countenance than it was then in its early bloom and freshness. Lined with

thought ; paled by years of toil ; the dark hair thinned ; the dark eyes caverned under brows habitually contracted—it is essentially the face of a Senator, one of the ‘*Patres Conscripti*.’ And there are subtle traits of character, readily enough discernible at a glance, by those who care to look for them, subtle though they are, in those nervous lineaments. A blending of generosity and scorn in the play of the nostrils, an alternating severity and sweetness in the mobile mouth. It is a face betraying every emotion, concealing nothing—incapable of concealment. We speak of this, as of something not by any means to a debater’s, and still less to a party leader’s, advantage. It is a very considerable and perpetual disadvantage to Mr. Gladstone. He ‘wears his heart upon his sleeve, for daws to peck at.’ He will visibly writhe under an ungenerous taunt, while it is being uttered. His visage darkens with indignation, while his adversary is yet speaking.”\*

“Mr. Gladstone’s face,” says another acute observer, “differs strangely from that of his great rival. It is the most mobile and expressive countenance in the House of Commons ; it can no more conceal the thoughts flitting through the brain behind it than the mirror can refuse to reflect the figure placed before it ; it is incapable of reserve or of mystery ; hope, fear, anxiety, exultation, anger, pleasure, each of these in turn is ‘writ large’ upon it, so that the spectator watching it closely can read in it, as in a book, the varying thoughts and feelings of him to whom it belongs. And the face is in the highest degree characteristic of the man. There never was a statesman more impulsive

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\* “The Gladstone Government, by a Templar,” pp. 123, 124.

than the present Prime Minister ; never one who took less pains to hide the workings of his mind from those around him, or who was more determined to wear his heart upon his sleeve. His openness in this respect is at once his fault and his virtue. It is an error in any man to whom are committed great destinies, and the policy of a mighty nation, and we cannot wonder that his critics should often have complained of it. But it has at the same time redeemed not a few of the mistakes and inconsistencies of his career, and has given the world evidence of the fact that, however impulsive and at times imprudent he may be, he is at least thoroughly sincere, even in his most impulsive actions."\*

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S ORIGIN AND PUBLIC CAREER.

William Ewart Gladstone was born in Liverpool, England, Dec. 29, 1809 : the son of John Gladstone, Esq., and of Anne, daughter of Andrew Robertson, Provost of Dingwall, Ross, in Scotland. The father was mentioned with respect in the House of Commons by Sir Robert Peel, in 1819, as "Mr. Gladstones, the great Liverpool merchant." He was legally authorized, in 1835, to drop the final letter of his name ; and was raised to a baronetcy in 1846, being succeeded in that title, five years after, by his eldest son, the present Sir Thomas Gladstone, the statesman's half brother.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone was educated at Eton and at Oxford, where he acquired an early eminence which had no

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\* "Cabinet Portraits, by T. Wemyss Reid," pp. 17, 18.

little influence on his future career. He entered Christ Church College in 1829, and took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1831, with the rare honors of a "double-first-class man"—first-class both in classics and in mathematics. He then became a Fellow of All Souls' College. In the year following, he entered Parliament for the first time, as member for Newark, being then under twenty-three. Two years later (1834), he took office for the first time, under Sir Robert Peel, as a Junior Lord of the Treasury. In 1835, he became Under Secretary for the colonies, holding office, however, for but two months. In 1841, he was made Vice-president of the Board of Trade, and in 1843, its President, having also a place in the cabinet. In 1845, he became Secretary for colonial affairs.

Up to this time he had been a moderate conservative, and was regarded by many as an "Oxford bigot." So faithful was his allegiance to his first chief that the Whig *Examiner* called him the "Pony Peel." His father owned slave plantations in Demerara, and Mr. Gladstone's first speech was delivered in reply to Lord Howick, on the question of Negro Emancipation, and urged the right of the planters to be compensated. He opposed the reform of the Irish church, the reduction of the number of Irish bishops, the Dissenters' Chapel Bill, the Endowment of Maynooth, and the Emancipation of the Jews. But when Sir Robert Peel announced his Free Trade policy in 1846, Mr. Gladstone was his firmest supporter; and from the time of his return to Parliament, in behalf of Oxford University, in 1847, he has heartily supported Liberal measures. In 1852, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and while holding this office made, in int

ing his annual "budget," a series of speeches which were pronounced by Lord John Russell (now Earl Russell), "to contain the ablest expositions of the true principles of finance ever delivered by a British statesman." After the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865, Mr. Gladstone became the leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, and in December, 1868, he became Premier of England.

At the session of 1873, Mr. Gladstone introduced an elaborate bill for the reform of university education in Ireland, the main object of which was the establishment of a system which should be acceptable to both Protestants and Catholics. The bill satisfied neither class, and was defeated; upon which the ministry resigned. Mr. Disraeli was called upon to form a new ministry, but declined, and Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues returned to their posts. The ministry was, however, again and again defeated, and on January 24, 1874, Mr. Gladstone unexpectedly issued an address announcing the dissolution of Parliament. The elections for a new Parliament gave a strong conservative majority. On Feb. 17 Mr. Gladstone resigned, and on the next day Mr. Disraeli assumed the premiership, which he still holds.

#### MR. GLADSTONE AS AN ORATOR.

"The first place among living competitors for the oratorical crown," says Mr. A. Hayward, in an admirable article in the *Quarterly Review*, "will be conceded without a dissenting voice to Mr. Gladstone. An excellent judge, a frequent opponent of his policy, whom we consulted, declared that it was Eclipse first and all the rest nowhere.

He may lack Mr. Bright's impressive diction, impressive by its simplicity, or Mr. Disraeli's humor and sarcasm ; but he has made ten eminently successful speeches to Mr. Bright's or Mr. Disraeli's one. His foot is ever in the stirrup ; his lance is ever in the rest. He throws down the gauntlet to all comers. Right or wrong, he is always real, natural, earnest, unaffected, and unforced. He is a great debater, a great parliamentary speaker ; with a shade more imagination, he would be a great orator."\*

"In his pronunciation there is, ineradicably noticeable, the provincial twang of Lancashire. As for his voice, it is like a silver clarion. And the charm of that harmonious voice is this—that, after the delivery of a speech four or five hours in its duration, and (*teste* Hansard !) there have been such speeches, the closing words of the peroration will ring as clear as a bell upon the ear, without the faintest perceptible indication, to the last, of anything like physical exhaustion."†

"Mr. Gladstone's oratorical manner," says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "is much more strongly marked by action than is Mr. Bright's. He emphasizes by smiting his right hand in the open palm of his left ; by pointing his finger straight out at his adversary, real or representative ; and, in his hottest moments, by beating the table with his clenched hand. Sometimes in answer to cheers he turns right round to his immediate supporters on the benches behind him, and speaks directly to them ; where-

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\* "The British Parliament ; its History and Eloquence." London Quarterly Review, April, 1872.

† "The Gladstone Government," p. 125.

upon the Conservatives, who hugely enjoy a baiting of the emotionable ex-Premier, call out 'Order! order!' This call seldom fails in the desired effect of exciting the right hon. gentleman's irascibility, and when he loses his temper his opponents may well be glad. Mr. Bright always writes out the peroration of his speeches, and at one time was accustomed to send the slip of paper to the reporters. Mr. Disraeli sometimes writes out the whole of his speeches. The one he delivered to the Glasgow students in November, 1873, was in type in the office of a London newspaper at the moment the right hon. gentleman was speaking at the University. Mr. Gladstone never writes a line of his speeches, and some of his most successful ones have been made in the heat of debate, and necessarily without preparation. His speech in winding up the debate on the Irish University Bill has rarely been excelled for close reasoning, brilliant illustration, and powerful eloquence; yet if it be referred to it will be seen that it is for the greater and best part a reply to the speech of Mr. Disraeli, who had just sat down, yielding the floor to his rival half an hour after midnight.

"Evidence of the same swift reviewing of a position, and of the existence of the same power of instantly marshaling arguments and illustrations, and sending them forth clad in a panoply of eloquence, is apparent in Mr. Gladstone's speech when commenting on Mr. Disraeli's announcement of the withdrawal of the main portion of the Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill. The announcement, and especially the manner in which it was made, was a surprise that almost stunned and momentarily bewildered the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone was bound to speak, and

to speak the moment Mr. Disraeli resumed his seat. He had no opportunity to take counsel, and no time to make preparations for his speech ; but the result of his masterly oration at this crisis was that the unpopularity and dissatisfaction created by the course he had taken in the matter of the Regulation of Public Worship Bill melted like snow in the firelight, and the conviction was borne in upon his discontented followers that as long as Mr. Gladstone lived and chose to hold the office, there was no other leader possible for the Liberal party.\*

“As a debater,” says Wemyss Reid, “he stands without a rival in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli possesses a brilliant wit, and powers of sarcasm to which he can lay no claim ; but no one who has seen Mr. Gladstone take his part in a great party battle will question his superiority as a debater to any of his rivals or colleagues. He is never seen to so much advantage as when, at the close of a long discussion, he rises in the midst of a crowded House impatient for the division, to reply to Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Hardy. The readiness with which he replies to a speech just delivered is amazing ; he will take up, one after another, the arguments of his opponent, and examine them and debate them with as much precision and fluency as though he had spent weeks in the preparation of his answer. Then, too, at such moments time is precious, and he is compelled to repress that tendency to prolixity, which is one of his greatest faults as an orator. His sen-

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\* “Men and Manner in Parliament, by the Member for the Chiltern Hundreds. Reprinted, with additions, from the *Gentleman's Magazine*.” London, 1874, pp. 65-69.

tences, instead of wandering on interminably, are short and clear, and from beginning to end of the speech there is hardly a word which seems unnecessary.

“The excitement, too, which prevails around him, always infects him strongly ; his pale face twitches, his magnificent voice quivers, his body sways from side to side as he pours forth argument, pleading, and invective, strangely intermingled. The storm of cheers and counter-cheers rages around him, as it can rage nowhere except in the House of Commons on such an occasion, but high and clear above the tumult rings out his voice, like the trumpet sounding through the din of the battle-field. As he draws to a close something like a calm comes over the scene, and upon both sides men listen eagerly to his words, anxious to catch each sentence of his peroration, always delivered with an artistic care which only one other member of Parliament can equal, and seldom failing to impress the House with its beauty. Then it is that his great powers are seen to the fullest advantage—voice, and accent, and gesture, all giving force and life to the words which he utters.

“And having upon such an occasion seen him in the most favorable light, let the reader go into the House of Commons during the ‘question hour,’ set apart for the torture of ministers, if he wishes to see how very different an appearance he can make under other circumstances. The art of answering questions is by no means to be despised by a Cabinet Minister ; but of all the great ministers we have had in recent times, Mr. Gladstone has the least knowledge of that art. His great fault is that he does not know when to stop. Having, in reply to some troub-

lesome questioner, made what seems to be an explicit declaration of his intentions, instead of sitting down as Mr. Disraeli would do under similar circumstances, he proceeds forthwith to explain, at interminable length, the alternative courses open to him, the reasons why none of those courses was suitable, and the arguments in favor of that which he has decided to adopt. On and still on he goes, with an unbroken fluency, and with a command of language which is marvelous, until a shade of weariness steals over the faces of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, and honorable gentlemen opposite unceremoniously show that they have heard enough by entering into a brisk conversation with each other. Some one, however, is watching him, and presently, as he glibly makes a statement upon a matter of fact, that some one, whoever he may be, gives him a direct contradiction. An angry frown instantly mantles upon the brows of the Premier; he hesitates, pauses, whispers a word to one of his trusty lieutenants at his side, and then possibly is compelled to make a material modification in his original statement. These inaccuracies of his in matters of detail are of too frequent occurrence, and are so notorious, that one or two men have openly declared him to be 'constitutionally incapable of speaking the truth.' This, of course, is a charge which no sensible person would for a moment believe in. Mr. Gladstone has, we are convinced, a most profound and genuine reverence for the truth as the truth; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that from carelessness, or some other cause, he is occasionally led into serious mis-statements, even of the simplest facts.

“And this failing is the less excusable inasmuch as there

is no one in the whole kingdom who, as a public speaker, has a command over facts, figures, or small matters of detail at all to be compared to his. The budget speeches which, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he has from time to time delivered, are so famous that we need merely refer to them. No one who heard any of those speeches, will forget the Chancellor's marvelous command over the regiments of figures he had to lay before the House; his knowledge of the smallest details of his financial scheme; and the wonderful art and skill which laid down the whole plan in its proper proportions, giving no undue prominence to one part, and showing no unmerited neglect towards another. Mr. Gladstone walks amongst figures like a king amongst his subjects; he plays with them like a juggler with his balls. Something of his capacity in this respect he showed in the great speech in which he introduced the Irish Church Bill to the House of Commons. For three hours did that speech flow on without interruption; it was long enough to have filled a goodly-sized volume, and yet from first to last the Premier had each one of his countless figures and facts in its proper place; and never halted or stumbled for a moment whilst performing his tremendous task.\*

"The most memorable passage of arms between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli came off in the debate on the budget (Nov., 1853), when the Derby government was defeated by a majority of nineteen. It had lasted four nights. Mr. Gladstone had not spoken. Sir James Graham and Mr. Sidney Herbert were anxious that he should

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 23-26.

not speak after Mr. Disraeli, who rose at a late hour. Indeed, it was understood that Mr. Disraeli was to close the debate. He fought his losing cause with spirit and dexterity, till (an unusual thing with him) he lost his temper and broke through all bounds of conventional decorum. Strong language may have been justified by the provocation, but he went too far when he told Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax) that petulance was not sarcasm, nor insolence invective; and said he viewed Sir James Graham with regard, but not with respect.

“The moment he ceased, before he had well time to resume his seat amidst the loud acclamations of his party, Mr. Gladstone bounded to the floor. He was encountered by menacing and derisive cheers; he was twice interrupted by an Irish member making unseemly noises in the gallery. But he was irrepressible: he stood firm as Guizot under his famous ‘*Oui, j’ai été à Gand.*’ ‘This speech,’ he repeated, ‘is one which must be answered, and answered at the moment. The character of England, involved in that of her public men, the character of England is at stake.’ After indignantly repelling Mr. Disraeli’s charges and invectives, he ended a masterly analysis of the budget by describing it as based on principles against which all true Conservatives stood pledged.

“Mr. Gladstone’s speeches (like Fox’s or the late Lord Derby’s) are not so well adapted for quotation as those of many inferior performers; because they are essentially working speeches. But, as an average specimen, we take the peroration of that on Parliamentary Reform (April 27, 1866, Lord Grosvenor’s motion):

“‘This Bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government

along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble friend Lord Russell. We stand with it now; we may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of to-night is not to be the last, but only the first of a series of divisions. At some point of the contest you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may slay, you may bury the measure that we have introduced. But we will write upon its gravestone for an epitaph this line, with certain confidence in its fulfillment :

“ Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.”

You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of these debates does not for a moment impede or disturb, those great social forces are against you; they work with us; they are marshaled in our support. And the banner which we now carry in the fight, though, perhaps, at some moment of the struggle, it may droop over our sinking heads, yet will float again in the eye of heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not distant victory.’

“ It was in this speech that after replying to Mr. Lowe, who had twitted him with opposing the Reform Bill in the Oxford Union Debating Club, when an undergraduate, in 1831, he turned to the Liberal party and said :

‘ I came amongst you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from their ranks, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in forma pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honorable service : you received me as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas :

“ Excepi ejectum littore, egentem.”

And I only trust you may not hereafter, at any time, have to complete the sentence in regard to me :

“Et regni, demens ! in parte locavi.”

You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of your confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must be forever in your debt.’

“An old and highly esteemed member of the Liberal party (Mr. Philips, Member for Bury) said that the delivery of this passage brought tears into his eyes ; and he added : ‘I was not ashamed to own it, when I observed that several friends near me were similarly moved.’

“Mr. Gladstone is more Ciceronian than Demosthenic. Amplification, not condensation, is his forte ; but he can be fanciful or pithy on occasions ; as when in a budget speech he compared his arrival at the part in which the remissions of taxation were to be announced, to the descent into the smiling valleys of Italy after a toilsome ascent of the Alps ; or when he said that it was the duty of the Minister to stand ‘like a wall of adamant,’ between the people and the Crown. His graceful reply to Mr. Chaplin will compensate for many a hasty reproof administered to assailants whom he had better have left unnoticed :

“‘The hon. member who has just sat down has admonished us, and myself in particular, that the sense of justice is apt to grow dull under the influence of a long parliamentary experience. But there is one sentiment which I can assure him does not grow dull under the influence of a long parliamentary experience, and that is the sense of pleasure when I hear—whether upon these benches or upon those opposite to me—an able, and at the same time frank, ingenuous, and manly statement of opinion, and one of such a character as to show me that the man who makes it is a real addition to

the intellectual and moral worth and strength of Parliament. Having said this, I express my thanks to the hon. member for having sharply challenged us. It is right that we should be so challenged, and we do not shrink from it.' " \*

The severest test by which an orator can be tried is commonly held to be that of immediate success—the actual changing of votes by eloquence, and the turning of defeat into victory. Tried by this standard, also, Mr. Gladstone is strong; and there are repeated instances on record where his personal power alone reversed the expected fate of some important measure. For instance, when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he brought in his budget, or financial estimate, in 1853, it was known that the most influential portion of the press, headed by the *Times*, had bent all its strength, for months, to compel a modification of the Income Tax, with a view to lighten the burden thrown on trades and professions by Schedule D.

"A strong pressure was put upon Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to fall in with the current of opinion, which was deemed irresistible. The day before the financial statement, there was a large dinner company (ministerialists) assembled at Sir William Molesworth's, when a member of the Government came in with a face of dismay to announce that Gladstone was obstinate, and that they should be all out within the week. Such was the general expectation. Within twenty-four hours after the delivery of his speech (April 18), every rational person was obliged to confess that the proposed modification was impracticable; and from that hour to this it has never been

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\* London Quarterly, April, 1872.

seriously entertained or formally proposed again. Another striking instance of the same kind is the revolution he effected in public and parliamentary opinion (May 4, 1863) by his speech against the exemption of charities from the Income Tax."\*

And it is still more remarkable that this sensitive and finely organized man can produce this effect of conviction, not merely among his equals in Parliament, but before a hostile out-door audience.

"See him in the cold gray mist of that October afternoon advance to the front of the platform at Blackheath, bareheaded, pale, resolute.

'Now one glance round, now upwards turns his brow,  
Hushed every breath : he rises—mark him now.'

"Unluckily, every breath was not hushed. From that surging sea of heads and faces arose an angry murmur that presaged a storm. The audience was the reverse of favorable : the reserved seats had been invaded by the populace, including many of the discharged dock-yard laborers ; and political emissaries were busy among the crowd. But a love of fair play, stimulated by curiosity, procured him his opportunity ; he began : his distinct articulation and finely-toned voice, 'loud as a trumpet with a silver sound,' commanded a wide circle, which widened as he went on ; an English audience is more easily won by firmness than by flattery ; and such was the influence of his manly self-assertion, combined with a judicious choice of topics, that the heath far and near resounded with plaudits, when he wound up by devoting himself, 'according to the me re

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\* London Quarterly, April, 1872.

of his gifts,' to the service of the country and the Queen. In little more than an hour he had recovered his waning popularity and set up his government."

"The extreme subtlety of his mind," says the same critic, "while supplying him with an inexhaustible store of replies and rejoinders, caused him to rely too much on over-refined distinctions, and on casuistical modes of reasoning. During Garibaldi's visit to London, it was suggested that a noble and richly jointured widow, who was much about with him, should marry him. To the objection that he had a wife living, the ready answer was, 'Oh, he must get Gladstone to explain her away.' He has also Burke's habit of attaching undue importance to secondary topics. But the same liability to exaggeration which occasionally impairs the effect of a great speech, not unfrequently elevates an ordinary one, and enables him to compel attention to what may really be an important matter, although an impatient or fastidious House may deem it small." \*

The undue copiousness of Mr. Gladstone's eloquence was pointed out, twenty years ago, by Mr. Shirley Brooks, in an admirable sketch of the House of Commons, in the *Quarterly Review*.† Mr. Brooks thinks that this statesman "would be a more popular orator if he would be less explicit; but while he exhausts the subject, he sometimes exhausts the listener." The critic then contrasts Mr. Gladstone's mode of answering questions with that of the other ministers then in office. He "points his finger, as one who is not going to let you off until you quite under-

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\* London Quarterly, April, 1872.

† July, 1854.

stand the subject, and then he explains it to you at such length, and with such a *copia verborum*, that you feel quite ashamed of the unreasonable trouble you have given to a man who has so much else to attend to. \* \* \* His answers contrast a good deal with those of Lord Palmerston. Supposing each statesman to be asked what day the session would be over, the Viscount would reply that it was the intention of her Majesty to close the session on the 18th of August.

“Mr. Gladstone would possibly premise that, inasmuch as it was for her Majesty to decide upon the day which would be acceptable to herself, it was scarcely compatible with Parliamentary etiquette to ask the Minister to anticipate such decision ; but, presuming that he quite understood the purport of the right hon. gentleman’s question, of which he was not entirely assured, the completion of the duties of the House of Commons, and the formal termination of the sittings of the Legislature, were two distinct things. He would say that her Majesty’s Minister had represented to the Queen that the former would probably be accomplished about the 18th of August, and that such day would not be unfavorable for the latter, and therefore, if the Sovereign should be pleased to ratify that view of the case, the day he had named would be probably that inquired after by the right honorable gentleman.”

#### MR. GLADSTONE AS A PARTY LEADER.

“We have said,” writes Mr. Wemyss Reid, “that Mr. Disraeli was a great party leader. To party leadership, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, Mr. Gladstone can

lay no claim. Mr. Gladstone has many of the best qualities of a great leader. Like Mr. Disraeli, he can inspire on the part of his followers a high degree of personal enthusiasm. Out of doors he has a still greater command over the popular feeling than Mr. Disraeli; nor is that fact to be accounted for by any question of politics. For whilst Mr. Disraeli's qualities, however much they may be admired by cultivated men of all political opinions, are 'caviare to the general,' Mr. Gladstone's are essentially popular. He has the passion, the enthusiasm, the fluency of speech, the apparent simplicity of action which are so dearly loved by the multitude. His name can be made a tower of strength for his party; it might be adopted as the watchword or the rallying cry of a nation.

"But in the House of Commons he finds the task of leading a majority one which is almost beyond his grasp, and in which he is only saved from the most serious blunders by the watchfulness of friends and colleagues. Partly, this is unquestionably due to the fact that he is incapable of making any allowances for the weaknesses of his fellow-creatures. He has great strength of his own; his soul, when he is engaged on any question of importance, is filled with an earnestness which is almost heroic, and he sees only one road to the end at which he aims—the shortest. Under these circumstances he is incapable of understanding how any of his followers, who share his creed, and profess to be anxious to reach the same goal as himself, can demur to the path which he is taking. For their individual crotchets he makes no allowances, and he is especially regardless of the unwillingness of the English gentleman to be driven in any particular direction.

“It is curious to see as the result of this how much needless irritation he succeeds at times in causing amongst his followers. Over and over again the Liberal clubs have rung with complaints of his overbearing manner, of his ‘temper’—it ought, rather, to be ‘temperament’—of his want of consideration for the ideas, the foibles, the prejudices of the rank and file of his party. The general result is, that he makes a bad leader. Indeed, it would be safer to say, that he does not lead at all, in the common sense of the word ; others lead for him. He has another weakness, which is strangely irritating, not perhaps to the majority, but at any rate to a very considerable minority of his followers ; we mean his abhorrence of such a thing as humor. He makes jests, himself, at times, and occasionally they are good ones ; but they are grim and ponderous jokes, such as one might expect to circle round the board of a funeral feast rather than in any livelier assemblage, and the fierceness of manner with which they are delivered, and the supernatural solemnity of his countenance, as he makes them, render it necessary that the man who ventures to laugh at them should have a bold heart. As to such a thing as humor in others he cannot see it. More than once, when the House has been convulsed with laughter, at some exquisite bit of ‘chaff’—to use a slang phrase—on the part of Mr. Disraeli, he has risen, and in the most grave and emphatic manner, replied seriously to the lively sarcasm of his foe.

“Then there is his ‘temper.’ We hear a great deal—as it seems to us a great deal more than we ought to hear—about ‘Gladstone’s temper.’ Even Liberal journals and Liberal members are fond of dwelling upon his hasty tem-

per, and it seems to be taken for granted that the Prime Minister is one of those peevish and passionate men who make life a misery to those around them. The clubs dwell with much emphasis upon his arrogance and his domineering disposition; and every little outburst of strong feeling which he displays is spoken of as though it were nothing more than that very contemptible thing—a fit of anger. As we have already said, it ought, it appears to us, to be Mr. Gladstone's temperament rather than his temper that should be held accountable for these occasional outbursts of which so much is made by those around him. That he is one of those finely-strung men of very tender susceptibilities, to whom the prick of a pin is more torture than the heaviest of downright blows, is certain. Equally certain is it that he has a will of enormous strength—Lord Salisbury has spoken of it in Parliament as an 'arrogant will,' and it is undoubtedly in the Cabinet a dominant will—that he holds, in a very considerable degree, the doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that he is in the heat of debate the victim of an impetuosity which sometimes hurries him into false positions, from which he is generally too proud to retreat afterwards.

“ But against these serious failings of temperament must be set the enthusiasm which is also a part of his nature, and which, when he has really worked himself up to boiling-point on a great question, he can always communicate to his followers; and the resolution which enables him to persevere with any work he has undertaken, in the face of difficulties which would overwhelm most men. As a minister in charge of a great measure, one to which he has devoted the whole strength of his wonderful mind,

he has not an equal. When Mr. Gladstone gives himself with all his earnestness—and he is the most earnest man now living in England—to a great public question, he shows a knowledge, an ability, a power in handling it, a grasp at once of the greatest principles and of the smallest details, a readiness to comprehend the objections raised to particular provisions of the bill, a fertility of resources in providing remedies for those objections, which no other English statesman can pretend to possess.”\*

#### MR. GLADSTONE AS A STATESMAN.

It is certainly a striking fact that the statesman first heralded by Macaulay as the rising hope of stern and unbending Tories, should live to be seriously regarded by his opponents as “a mixture of Cromwell and Gambetta ;” and to be charged with aiming at Dictatorship. “He seizes, it is seriously said, the prerogative of the Crown, in order to coerce the independence of the House of Lords ; he uses his majority in the House of Commons to overbear the Sovereign ; and he dragoons the House of Commons by appeals to a public opinion and a national will, independent of and superior to it, of which he affects to be the priest and interpreter.” Even his warm admirers point out the existence in him of a democratic vein that seems to belong rather on the American side of the Atlantic. “Instead of governing the country through the House of Commons, he occasionally seems disposed to govern the House of Commons through the country. He sometimes speaks

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” pp. 19–23.

as if he had an independent mandate from the nation to which its Parliamentary representatives were bound to submit. No one can say that this doctrine has ever been distinctly expressed or is consciously entertained by the Prime Minister; but phrases have been occasionally used, and a course of action has now and then been adopted, which point to the existence of some such feeling."\*

It will seem, to most Americans, that this criticism is a compliment, and that Mr. Gladstone simply accepts the inevitable tendency which is, even in England, substituting a self-governing nation for a nation to be governed. The changes to which he yields are as inevitable as the change which, in America, has long since abolished the original functions of an Electoral College, and is soon to abolish that institution itself. Mr. Gladstone sees that an English minister must, after all, take his policy from the people, and show his genius by the skill with which he embodies this public demand. That Mr. Gladstone is thus skillful, all admit. The author of "Political Portraits" well says:

"In the power of giving legislative form to the policy on which the nation has determined, of organizing complex and difficult details into a complete and orderly scheme, and of recommending it by inexhaustible resources of exposition and illustration to Parliament, Mr. Gladstone never had a superior, or, we may venture to say, an equal. As each reform has become what, in the slang of the House of Commons, is called a practical question, Mr. Gladstone has been ready to execute the mandate of the

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\* "Political Portraits," from the *London Daily News*, p. 17.

constituencies. If he had been in advance of public opinion, like Mr. Bright, or lagged behind it, like Lord Salisbury, he could not have discharged this essential work ; and his best genius and truest strength would have lacked their opportunity. To this peculiarity of character and circumstance the fact is owing that in Mr. Gladstone's career, more than in that of any other man who has lived through the same period, the history of England during the past forty years is reflected. If he had been from the first, or early in his career, a better theoretic politician, he might have been a less useful practical statesman."

"The fact is," says the critic of the *Daily News*, "that the early impression of Mr. Gladstone as a stern and unbending Tory, and the later censure of him as a capricious and erratic revolutionist, are equally without foundation. True, he has traversed nearly the whole space which separates the opinions of Lord Eldon from the opinions of Mr. Bright. The distance is great ; but the time taken to accomplish it has been long. Mr. Gladstone has been forty years about it, and the journey is perhaps not yet completed."

And if we are to test Mr. Gladstone's practical statesmanship, like his oratory, by its visible results, it is easy to point to such lasting monuments as the daring fiscal measures of Sir Robert Peel's administration, largely planned and conducted by Mr. Gladstone ; the great extension of suffrage, proposed in his Reform Bill of 1866, and afterwards carried through, almost of necessity, by his opponents ; the abolition of purchase in the army ; the disendowment and disestablishment of the Irish church ; and the Treaty of Washington.

In Mr. Gladstone's record as a statesman, the point which will, to most Americans, seem peculiarly open to criticism, is his attitude in regard to our own civil war. Yet so far as criticism can be disarmed by frank apology and retraction, it was surely done by him. For Mr. Gladstone wrote, in August, 1867, a letter to Mr. C. Edwards Lester,—a letter first published in the *New York Times*, eighteen months later,—in which he fully recognizes his mistake. "He says"—to adopt the able summary contained in the *London Spectator* of Jan. 16, 1869—"that at that time he had not only miscalculated the relative strength of the two combatants, but misunderstood the true issue for which they were fighting. The North had not yet identified itself with the cause of abolition; and he mistakenly believed the cause of the Union to be almost necessarily the cause also of slavery, because he supposed that the whole power of the Union was mortgaged to sustaining slavery in the South: while he held that as soon as the Union should be fairly divided, the slaves would prove themselves too strong for the whites taken alone, since the latter would have been no longer backed by an executive of the United States bound to execute a fugitive slave law."

Those who remember how much there was in the published speeches of both Abolitionists and Anti-Abolitionists to justify this point of view; how constantly it had been urged by Messrs. Garrison and Phillips, that Disunion would be a benefit to the slaves, and how promptly Messrs. Seward and Adams had assured the English people that the war would not affect slavery; can have some charity for Mr. Gladstone's difficulties. The *Spectator*, however, sees in these the proof of "a very strong previous prepossession

for the peculiar institution of the South ;” and Justin McCarthy declares this to have been a common solution of Mr. Gladstone’s attitude. “The Gladstones had and have large West India property ; and when England emancipated her slaves by paying off the planters, the Gladstones came in for no small share of the national purchase-money. When the great Liberal orator came out so impetuously and unluckily with his celebrated panegyric on Jefferson Davis, a few years ago, some people shook their head, and remarked that the old planter spirit does not quite die out in the course of one generation.”\* Be this as it may, it is certain that through all the long subsequent discussion of the Alabama claims, Mr. Gladstone was uniformly just and even friendly to the United States, and this in the face of the bitterest opposition from the other party. His error was the error of educated England in general ; but from the moment when it was retracted, America had in the English government no manlier friend.

#### MR. GLADSTONE AS AN AUTHOR.

Mr. Gladstone first came before the public as an author at the age of 28, in a book published by him at Amiens in 1838, while traveling on the Continent for relief from a disease of the eyes. The title of this work was “The State in its Relations with the Church.” It expressed very highly the phase of thought which was passing rapidly through three

Leaders,”

editions, and had the honor, as has been already said, of an elaborate review by Macaulay, who bestowed the highest praise upon the spirit and ability of the author, while controverting his opinions. This was followed, in 1840, by a work of somewhat similar tone, entitled "Church Principles considered in their Results." In 1845, he published a "Manual of Family Prayers from the Liturgy," and a pamphlet on the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel. He wrote, in 1851, a pamphlet under the title of "Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen," in which he asked the interference of the British Government in behalf of thirty thousand political prisoners kept in confinement by the Neapolitan Bourbons. This pamphlet passed through eleven editions in a single year, was forwarded by Lord Palmerston to all the British ministers on the continent of Europe, and was translated into the principal European languages.

Mr. Gladstone's "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age" (3 vols. 8vo) were published in 1858. Ten years later, in 1868, he published "Essays on Ecce Homo," and a pamphlet on the Irish Church question, entitled "A Chapter of Autobiography." Early in 1869 appeared "Juventus Mundi; the Gods and Men of the Heroic Age." This was to some extent a condensation of his earlier work on Homer, and was even more highly creditable to the thought and scholarship of the Premier. No modern writer, perhaps, has brought out so strongly the essential refinement and dignity of tone pervading the great Greek poets; and the high position conceded to woman in the heroic age of Greece. The "Juventus Mundi" was reprinted in Boston in 1869, but I was surprised to find Mr. Gladstone, three years after, still ignorant of the fact. He

seemed much pleased to hear that he had thus a body of readers in America also. I suppose that an author's joys and solitudes are much the same, to whatever heights of political preferment he may reach.

Indeed, it has been given to Mr. Gladstone to prove, during the last few months, that it is now the author, not the statesman, who rules the world; and he may have taken some secret pleasure in proving that he could, when out of office, move England more by his pen than his successful rival could influence it from his place in Parliament. The astonishing impression made by his recent pamphlet is well known. The work itself was an amplification of a text from an article of his own, in the *Contemporary Review* (Oct., 1874), and bore the title "The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance; a Political Exposition." The vigor of the style, the learning exhibited, and the source whence it came, all contributed to give it an extraordinary influence. Edition after edition was called for, and tens of thousands of copies were sold. It was boldly proclaimed in this pamphlet that, since 1870, "Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem*, a policy of violence and change in faith;" "that she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history;" "that she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was thought to have disused;" and "that Rome requires a convert who now joins her, to forfeit his moral and mental freedom, and to place his loyalty and civil duty at the mercy of another."

Mr. Gladstone avoided committing himself as to the policy which might be necessary for England, in view of these facts, but his statement of the facts themselves proved

enough to rouse controversy to the utmost. What was most important, this discussion elicited from some of the leading representatives of the old Roman Catholic families in England the most positive disclaimers of divided allegiance ; while Rev. Dr. J. H. Newman—whom Mr. Gladstone himself describes as : ‘the first living theologian now within the Roman Catholic Communion’—has by no means proved himself so loyal to the Pope’s temporal supremacy as might have been expected.

#### CONCLUSION.

The excitement produced by the pamphlet had by no means died away, when Mr. Gladstone again attracted all eyes to himself by writing to Earl Granville his formal resignation of the leadership of the Liberal party. The announcement was made, Jan. 16, 1875, in the following terms :

“I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as leader of the Liberal party. After forty-two years of laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire with the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated by personal views regarding the method of spending the closing years of my life. My conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed on the same principles as hitherto, and arrangements for the treatment of general business and to advance the convenience of the Liberal party will have my cordial support.”

Earl Granville replied : “I have communicated in detail the reasons, for which I profoundly regret, and deprecate your decision. My late colleagues fully agree in this

regret at the failure of the endeavors to dissuade you from your purpose, and doubtless the Liberal party also concur with us in the observations we addressed you, prompted by considerations of public advantages and not merely by a sense of your service and our admiration and attachment."

Among the various comments on this unexpected event, it is probable that none better speaks the average feeling of the Liberal party than the following from the *Spectator* :

"Every man, however necessary to his fellow-men, must be the ultimate judge of his own conduct, but Mr. Gladstone's letter of resignation is nothing less than a calamity. His decision has been made final just at the moment when the party, and to a large extent the country, had made up its mind to renew cordially and thoroughly its old allegiance, and to follow him as Englishmen follow a leader who is fighting up the hill in the face of overpowering foes. The appreciation of Mr. Gladstone is probably stronger with his party now than it has ever been. Time has shown those who honestly dissented from him, such as the non-conformists, that they have nothing to expect either from the policy, or the squeezeableness, or the good-nature of his adversaries, and they were openly rearranging themselves to fight under his banner. Time has also worn away the bitterness of those who were discontented with him on personal grounds, many of whom failed to obtain seats in the new Parliament, and time has riveted the faith of the old Whigs in the wisdom of their originally unwilling choice. Above all, time has shown the Liberals throughout the country that for Mr. Gladstone no equal substitute is obtainable. The party has many able leaders, but some objection of some sort can be raised to each ; and there is

this objection to them all, that no one of them is or could be an effective leader in the presence of the disapproving member for Greenwich. That part which Sir Robert Peel played successfully for some years is not open to Mr. Gladstone.

“There is not a competent follower behind him who does not know that he must either lead, or travel abroad, or, by occasional interventions, dwarf any other leader into powerlessness, and who was not therefore ready to accept him, if not with his whole heart—and that is the case with nine out of ten—at least with his whole brain. If Mr. Gladstone had only said that he would lead, there would have been one mighty cheer, and a party as thoroughly disciplined as Liberals can ever hope to be. It would have taken but one session of real hardship, of daily watchfulness and contest and intellectual victory, to make the party again strong, and give them that distant sight of power which impels political leaders to their highest projects and most strenuous efforts to achieve them. And now the prospect is overcast, the party thrown into anarchy,—for, after all, its chiefs were Mr. Gladstone’s ministers, and after his resignation cease to form an organism,—and the rulers of the future are left without the guidance of the man on whose genius they could most confidently rely. Still young, as years are counted in English politics, in the fullest vigor of health, with his brain teeming with capacities, with an army of followers ready at his beck, Mr. Gladstone retires from the service of the country which owes to him more than to any man now living, and at least as much as to any premier in her constitutional record.

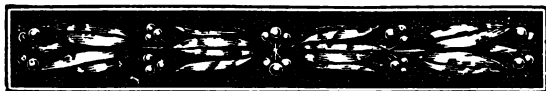
“And painful as it is to say it, there is another word

remaining to be said. This last duty done—and we maintain that it is a moral duty of the most imperative kind—Mr. Gladstone must bethink himself whether, until the new leadership is compacted, he can conscientiously intervene even occasionally in debate. It seems so hard to write, but the plain truth lies there, that Mr. Gladstone in the house so dwarfs every other Liberal, the sound of his voice so terrifies every other orator, the words of his counsel so outweigh the advice of any other Ulysses, that leadership may be an impossibility or a humiliation. There is not a possible leader who, if he knew that Mr. Gladstone were coming after him, would not lose half his powers in the depressing consciousness that he was sure to be outshone, that he might possibly be rebuked, and that he might be criticised into inanition. With Mr. Gladstone in the house, no ecclesiastical policy is possible to the front Liberal bench, and no financial policy can be pressed with a certainty of acceptance. With Napoleon in the ranks, no marshal can command, and it is from very admiration, from an enthusiasm of belief in his powers, that we repeat the advice of those who wish him no good, and pray him, if he will be kingmaker instead of king, not to let his shadow take all brightness out of the new-made crown and all authority out of a scarcely welded sceptre.”

This action on Mr. Gladstone's part appears now (February, 1875) to be final. But who can say? He is but sixty-six—“still young, as years are counted in English politics”—and it is safe to say that his public career is not ended. It is even possible that his period of greatest influence may yet lie in the future. But in what direction that influence may lie, it is impossible to tell. There is a va-

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riable and incalculable element in Mr. Gladstone, resulting from the very earnestness of his nature and the sensitiveness of his conscience. His very love of justice is liable at any moment to put him into attitudes which astonish his own allies, and he was once charged by Mr. Grant Duff with a habit of "turning round and firing his revolver in the face of his followers."



## II.

### MR. DISRAELI.

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**T**HE visitor to the House of Commons, asking to have Mr. Disraeli pointed out, is directed to the middle of the first Treasury bench, where sits a man whose aspect, temperament, and career make him unique among Englishmen. He is of middle height, of rather slender figure, and of scrupulously neat aspect. He looks self-absorbed and utterly alone. "Either because his colleagues do not care to chat with him, or because he discourages private conversation in the House, Mr. Disraeli invariably sits apart, in a kind of grim loneliness. Mr. Gladstone is, except when he sleeps, rarely quiet for a moment, frequently engaging in conversation with those near him, often laughing heartily himself, and being the cause of laughter in his interlocutors. When Mr. Disraeli enters the House and takes his accustomed seat, he crosses one leg over the other, folds his arms, hangs down his head, and so sits for hours at a time in statuesque silence." \*  
"Over the high, arched forehead," says Wemyss Reid,

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 45.

“there hangs from the crown of the head a single curl of dark hair, a curl which you cannot look at without feeling a touch of pathos in your inmost heart, for it is the only thing about the worn and silent man reminding you of the brilliant youth of ‘Vivian Grey.’ The face below this solitary lock is deeply marked with the furrows left by care’s ploughshare; the fine dark eyes look downwards, the mouth is closed with a firmness that says more for this man’s tenacity of will than pages of eulogy would do; but what strikes you more than anything else is the utter lack of expression upon the countenance. No one looking at the face, though but for a moment, could fall into the error of supposing that expression and intelligence are not there; they are there, but in concealment.

“Much is said of the power possessed by Napoleon the Third of hiding his thoughts from the keenest scrutiny; but more than once even his power over his countenance has been sorely taxed, and he has been glad of the grateful shelter of the curling mustache that shades his mouth. Without any such help, however, Mr. Disraeli has a face that is simply inscrutable. Again and again have hundreds of keen eyes been turned at critical moments towards that face, to read, if it might be possible, something of the thoughts of the man himself; but never once, not even in the most exciting crisis of personal or political conflict, has the face unwittingly relaxed, or friend or foe been able to read aught there. It is the face of a sphinx, inscrutable and unfathomable; it is, as men of every party will admit, the most remarkable face in England.”\*

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 3.

## MR. DISRAELI'S ORIGIN AND POLITICAL CAREER.

The brilliant painter of "Political Portraits" in the *Daily News*, thinks that none of Mr. Disraeli's early novels disclose as much of the man as is given in the brief sketch of his family history, prefixed, under the form of a memoir of his father, to the later editions of "Curiosities of Literature." "In the short memoir in question, Mr. Disraeli accounts for himself more satisfactorily than any formal autobiography could do. For the purpose of understanding him, it is worth all the rest of his works put together. It shows the medium, as naturalists call it, in which he was reared, the influences which acted upon his genius and character, and against which in turn his genius and character reacted. In relating the history of his family, Mr. Disraeli supplies us with the key to his political life.

"In the fifteenth century Mr. Disraeli's ancestors, under a name different from that which they subsequently bore, were settled in Spain, whence, towards the close of that century, they were driven by the persecutions of the Inquisition to seek a refuge in the territories of the Venetian Republic. 'Grateful to the God of Jacob, who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli—a name never borne before or since by any other family, in order that their race might be forever recognized.' In 1745 Mr. Disraeli's grandfather, Benjamin Disraeli, the younger of two brothers, settled in England. Mr. Disraeli would seem not only to have received his grandfather's name, but to have inherited from him some

of his qualities. He is depicted as 'a man of ardent character, sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortunate; with a temper which no disappointment could disturb, and a brain, amid reverses, full of resource.' The immigrant, as his grandson relates, made his fortune, laid out an Italian garden at Enfield, played whist with Sir Horace Mann, 'ate macaroni which was dressed by the Venetian consul,' and sang canzonettas. He had married a daughter of his own race, who, however, 'never pardoned him for his name,' since it identified her with a people of whom she was ashamed, and from whom they kept aloof. As often happens in similar cases, the only son of the enterprising Jewish merchant was the very opposite of his father, a timid recluse, living among his books, simple as Goldsmith, and learned as a grammarian of the Middle Ages. His birth, as his son has pointed out, left him without relations or family acquaintance. 'He not only never entered into the politics of the day, but he could never understand them. He never was connected with any particular body or set of men; comrades of school or college, or confederates in that public life which, in England, is, perhaps, the only foundation of real friendship.'

"Benjamin Disraeli, the grandfather, who, but for his retirement from business before the era of the revolutionary wars and the great loans, would probably, his descendant thinks, have become a millionaire, died when the future Prime Minister of England was a lad of twelve. Reared in a home of as absolute seclusion from English society as if it had been placed in an island of the Mediterranean, with occasional glimpses, perhaps, at Enfield, of a strange society, more foreign than English, and more cosmopolitan

than either, the young Disraeli must early have felt that strange sense of moral detachment from the nation in which he has lived, and in which he has attained the highest place, which is visible in his writings and his career. In both homes he must soon have learned that his name and race placed a certain barrier between him and the distinctions to which he aspired. By a somewhat sweeping and incredible negative, he describes his grandmother as 'so mortified by her social position, that she lived until eighty without indulging a tender expression.' She disliked her race, and was, as Mr. Disraeli himself bears witness, ashamed of the name she bore. Mr. Disraeli deserves only praise for the contrary impulse, which has led him to assert that name and that race against ignorant and bigoted contempt. Still they set him apart. He was outside the English world; and, in spite of his intimate participation in English politics, he has been as a foreigner in them. He has understood them with a sort of external intellect; but he has never thoroughly entered into them, and has cared for them as little on their own account as his father did. Parties and questions have been with him weapons, and not causes. He has written a formal 'Vindication of the British Constitution,' and in the 'Adventures of Captain Popanilla' has composed one of the most caustic satires upon it that have ever appeared. He was the champion of Free Trade in his earlier books, and won party-leadership as the advocate of Protection. He has laughed at our aristocracy—in 'Lothair' he laughs at them still—and has done them homage, denounced them as a Venetian oligarchy, and eulogized them as the dignified pillars on which order and liberty rest. He has been a Radical,

a Tory-Radical, and a Tory without the Radical, a Conservative, and a Constitutionalist ; the client of Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell, the colleague of Lord Salisbury, the Mentor of Lord John Manners, and the chief adviser of the late Lord Derby."\*

Mr. Disraeli was born in London (at No. 6 Bloomsbury Square), December 21, 1805, being the eldest son of Isaac Disraeli. His mother's maiden name was Basevi. He was taught by private tutors, and was placed, when very young, as articled clerk with an eminent solicitor, who was an intimate friend of the elder Disraeli, and who, being childless, wished to transmit his lucrative practice to his friend's son. The young man remained in this position for some three years ; after which he traveled on the Continent, and, on returning to England, published, when only twenty, his novel of " Vivian Grey." It immediately attracted much notice, and won for its author many flattering social attentions. Lady Blessington thus described to Willis, a few years later, the young author's first appearance in her drawing room :

" Disraeli, the elder, came here with his son, the other night. It would have delighted you to see the old man's pride in him, and the son's respect for his father. Disraeli, the elder, lives in the country, about twenty miles from town ; seldom comes up to London, and leads a life of retired leisure, each day hoarding up and dispensing forth treasures of literature. He is courtly, yet urbane, and impresses one at once with confidence in his goodness. In his manner, Disraeli the younger is quite the character of Vivian

Grey, full of genius and eloquence, with extreme good nature and perfect frankness of character." \*

The young author then traveled in the East, published more novels, and, in 1832, offered himself as a candidate for Parliament, in the borough of High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire. He appeared on that occasion as a Radical, recommended by Mr. Hume and Sir E. L. Bulwer. It is said that he had applied unsuccessfully to O'Connell for indorsement. He was defeated again, and yet again, and on hearing that Earl Grey, whose relative he was opposing, had asked the question "Who is he?" Disraeli published a vehement political pamphlet under that title, and then another pamphlet entitled "The Crisis Examined." He again announced himself as a candidate at Marylebone, and this, too, failing, became a candidate at Taunton, in 1835, as a Conservative.

On one occasion, during this canvass, he publicly denounced O'Connell as "a bloody traitor." To this O'Connell afterwards replied that, for aught he knew, Disraeli might be "the true heir-at-law of the impenitent thief who died on the Cross." For this Disraeli challenged Morgan O'Connell, but the challenge was not accepted; Disraeli was bound over to keep the peace, and the correspondence was published. One letter to O'Connell closed with the words: "We shall meet at Philippi, where I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting castigation for the insults you have lavished upon me." Two years later, when he at length obtained a seat from the borough of Maidstone, in the first Parliament of Queen Victoria's reign,

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\* "Pencilings by the Way." London, 1835, III. 77.

his first speech contained a violent denunciation of O'Connell. Unfortunately, this first speech was a failure, through the exaggeration of his manner of speaking. It was greeted with the laughter of the House. He closed it, however, with these words: "I am not surprised at the reception I have experienced. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. I shall sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me." Two years later, in 1839, this prediction began to be fulfilled, and he made a speech that commanded the respectful attention of the House.

In 1839, Mr. Disraeli married the widow of his friend and colleague in the Maidstone representation, Wyndham Lewis. This lady's fortune and her personal character had alike a happy influence on his destinies, and he has dedicated one of his novels to her as to "a perfect wife." On his declining a peerage in 1868, she was created Viscountess Beaconsfield.

During the few years after his marriage, he published another remarkable series of novels, which, like his earliest fiction, were supposed to portray real characters, and which sketched the outline of a new party called "Young England," based upon a sort of High-Church radicalism. The semi-political character of these works helped his parliamentary prestige. But the turning-point in his political career is commonly considered to have been the occasion when, in 1844, he separated himself from Sir Robert Peel, becoming the spokesman of those who adhered to the policy of Protection. "Hitherto he had been rather endured than encouraged, the elder folk among the party with which he had allied himself looking with suspicion upon the

young man who came down to the House with carefully prepared epigrams and not too pellucid adumbrations of a new philosophy, and who was in personal aspect not altogether dissimilar from Maud's brother,

‘ That jeweled mass of millinery,  
That oiled and curled Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence.’

But there was no one ready and able to say such cruel things of a great Minister tottering to his fall as he : and so it came to pass that Mr. Disraeli was accepted as the spokesman of a party, and having once gained a responsible and weighty position in the House of Commons, improved his opportunities till he reached the highest eminence of English political life.”\*

It is said by those who heard these extraordinary attacks that no printed reports can give any impression of their venom and their vigor. This may well be, and yet enough of these qualities remains to astonish the reader. For instance, Mr. Disraeli said of his antagonist that he “ had all along, for thirty or forty years, traded on the ideas of others ; ” that “ his life had been one great appropriation clause ; ” and that “ he had ever been the burglar of other men’s intellects.” He described Sir Robert Peel’s speeches as “ dreary pages of interminable talk ; full of predictions falsified, pledges broken, calculations that had gone wrong, and budgets that had blown up. And this not relieved by a single original thought, a single generous impulse, or a single happy expression.” The policy of the Premier was

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\* “ Men and Manner in Parliament,” p. 245.

described as "a system so matter of fact, yet so fallacious ; taking in everybody, though everybody knew he was deceived ; a system so mechanical, yet so Machiavellian, that he could hardly say what it was, except a sort of humdrum hocus-pocus, in which the ' Order of the Day ' was moved to take in a nation." And Mr. Disraeli called on the House of Commons to "dethrone a dynasty of deception, by putting an end to this intolerable yoke of official despotism and Parliamentary imposture."

In 1849 he became the recognized leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. In 1852 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a member of the Privy Council, under Lord Derby. This ministry remained in office less than a year, but resumed power in February, 1858, and he was reappointed to the same position. In February, 1859, he brought forward a reform bill, extending the suffrage very widely, and basing it rather on education than on property. It was defeated in the House of Commons, March 31, 1859, and Parliament was dissolved in consequence. In July, 1866, Lord Derby again became Premier, and Mr. Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and the new reform bill was soon after passed, giving the right of suffrage to all householders in a borough, and to every person in a county who had a freehold of forty shillings. In February, 1868, Lord Derby resigned, and Mr. Disraeli became Premier, but resigned in December, having been defeated on the Irish Church question ; and the country having meantime pronounced against him, at a general election, Mr. Gladstone succeeded him, but in turn resigned in February, 1874, when Mr. Disraeli again became Prime Minister, a position which he still holds.

## MR. DISRAELI AS AN ORATOR.

“When he rises to speak,” says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of Mr. Disraeli, “he generally rests his hand for a moment upon the table, but it is only for a moment, for he invariably endeavors to gain the ear of his audience by making a point at the outset, and the attitude which he finds most conducive to the happy delivery of points is to stand balancing himself upon his feet with his hands in his coat-tail pockets. In this position, with his head hung down as if he were mentally debating how best to express a thought that had just occurred to his mind, Mr. Disraeli slowly utters the polished and poisoned sentences over which he has spent laborious hours in the closet.\* \* \*

“But the merest tyro in the House knows a moment beforehand when Mr. Disraeli is approaching what he regards as a convenient place in his speech for dropping in the phrase-gem he pretends to have just found in an odd corner of his mind. They see him leading up to it; they note the disappearance of the hands in the direction of the coat-tail pockets, sometimes in search of the pocket-handkerchief, which is brought out and shaken with a light and careless air, but most often to extend the coat-tails, whilst with body gently rocked to and fro, and an affected hesitancy of speech, the speaker produces his *bon mot*. For the style of repartee in which Mr. Disraeli indulges—which, may be described generally as a sort of solemn chaffing, varied by strokes of polished sarcasm—this manner is admirable, in proportion as it has been seldom observed. But it is monotonous to a degree perhaps exceeded only by that of Mr. Cardwell, who, during his last speech on the Army

Estimates, was timed with a watch, and found to go through the following series of oratorical performances with the regularity of a pendulum, preserving throughout an hour the exact time allotted at the outset to each manoeuvre : First, he advanced to the table and rested upon it, leaning his left arm upon the edge ; secondly, he stood bolt upright and retired half a pace from the table, letting his arms hang stiffly by his side ; thirdly, he put both hands out and arranged the papers before him ; fourthly, he retired a full pace, folded his hands behind him under his coat-tails, and again stood bolt upright, looking like an undertaker who had called for orders. This latter was his favorite position, and he remained in it for the longest period. But when the time came to forsake it, he advanced, leaned his arm upon the table, and again went through the full round of graceful action. Mr. Disraeli is not as bad as this ; but his oratorical movements are formed in the same school, and are spoiled by the same defects. Not being an orator by nature, and knowing the necessity of some action while speaking, he stiffly performs a series of bodily jerks, which are as much like the easy, natural gestures of the true orator as is the waddling of a duck across a stubble-field like the progress of a swan over the bosom of a lake. \* \* \* \*

“ It seemed a special providence that the rival leaders of party should be men of such diametrically opposed temperament, and that a feast so spiced with variety should be provided for the delectation of the connoisseur. An artificial, highly-polished, keenly-sharpened, epigrammatic, terse, unemotional style that of Mr. Disraeli ; and then to be followed by Mr. Gladstone, trembling through every fiber with the quick, hot rush of passion, glowing

and copious in language, luxuriant in fancy, fervid in conviction, and often beside himself with righteous rage." \*

An acute observer, Mr. Shirley Brooks, remarked of Mr. Disraeli's oratory of twenty years ago, that his premeditated speeches, no matter how brief the time for preparation, were far better than his off-hand replies. "Unprepared, he has a tendency to verbiage, and to a repetition of the same idea, without a sufficient variety of treatment: prepared, and not a blow misses; not a sarcasm is impeded by a weakening phrase. The arrow, stripped of all plumage except that which aids and steadies its flight, strikes within a hair's breadth of the archer's aim; whether it finds the joint of the harness, or shivers on the shield, is occasionally matter of opinion; but that it often wounds deeply would seem to be proved by the exceeding ferocity with which, out of the House, Mr. Disraeli is assailed. In the House, it is rare for any one but Mr. Gladstone to meddle with him." †

Mr. Escott thus describes the demeanor of Mr. Disraeli, under fire, in the House of Commons. "There, seated in the middle of the Treasury Bench, is Mr. Disraeli, calm, impassive, and to all appearance 'in inward meditation wrapt,' and dreamily unconscious of all that is going on around him. Immediately opposite is Mr. Gladstone speaking—for we will suppose it to be one of the occasions on which the leader of the Opposition camp has forsaken his Cambrian seclusion at the bidding of the Public Worship

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," pp. 47-49, 280.

† *London Quarterly*, July, 1854.

Bill—in his most effective manner. Occasionally Mr. Disraeli leans forward to the table, dips a pen in ink, and notes down a single word on a diminutive piece of paper. But the motion seems merely mechanical, and the Prime Minister once more lapses into apparent lethargy. Mr. Gladstone is now drawing on to his peroration ; and presently, having brought his final sentence to a close in a tone full of emphasis and passion, sits down. Not a moment is lost ; the cheers have not died away when Mr. Disraeli springs from his seat, with all the artificially suppressed impetuosity which marked his manner twenty years ago. The management of his voice is much now as it was then. In gesture Mr. Disraeli never much indulged. He used indeed, to be very much in the habit of toying, somewhat affectedly, with a cambric pocket-handkerchief at particular points of his address. That device he has now discarded, and a slight inclination of the body is the only sign which he gives of any access of momentary emotion. His utterance is clear as of old, and the occasional very slight hesitation only serves to give emphasis to the phrase or word which it precedes. It has been said, with truth, of the Parliamentary manner of Mr. Disraeli, that no orator ever carried to a higher perfection the art of compelling a hearer to listen to every word spoken. It is his characteristic to adopt a tentative manner until he discovers, by the acclamations with which some cleverly turned phrase is received, that he has hit the House between wind and water. Then his voice changes, his attitude becomes more erect. Confident of the result, he proceeds to enforce the argument, or to point the moral, first flashed on the House by a single verbal felicity, with every variety

of illustration, and with a luxurious abundance of epithets." \*

Mr. Disraeli has also much more of wit and lightness of manner—that convenient quality which Edmund Quincy once defined as “specific levity”—than his great rival. Being or seeming to be far less in earnest than Mr. Gladstone, he finds it more easy to joke with his opponents, or even to flatter them. “Not merely has he been in a great degree all things to all men, complimenting now the Home Rulers on their good taste and moderation, now some erewhile antagonist on the conscientious energy of his career, but he has seldom failed, when opportunity offered, to import an element of jocularly into the senatorial routine. One is reminded by the reception given to Mr. Disraeli, when he rises to answer the most trivial inquiry, of the old story of Theodore Hook. If the author of *Sayings and Doings* asked for the mustard, the whole company went into roars of laughter. Mr. Disraeli has acquired such a reputation for witty antithesis, and odd combinations of words, that the most commonplace of his replies is quite enough to elicit an anticipatory titter from both sides of the House. It can hardly be said that Mr. Disraeli’s colleagues are equally successful in this line of effort. Mr. Cross frequently essays the humorous rôle, but his very mild jests fall flat, and not the faintest suspicion of cachinnation is audible. Mr. Disraeli’s weapon can be handled by himself alone.

“Taking a retrospect of all the rhetorical incidents and episodes in the House of Commons between the months

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\* T. H. S. Escott, in *Fraser’s Magazine*, Oct., 1874.

of March and August, the most assiduous *habitué* will be able only to call to mind one genuine joke, and that was the happy comparison by Mr. Disraeli of Mr. Fawcett's incessant queries addressed to the Government, in the course of the debate on the second reading of the Endowed Schools Amendment Bill, with 'a practice of which we have heard a great deal lately—the Catechism after the Second Lesson.' But Mr. Disraeli has coined phrases which have excited momentary merriment, some of which may win a permanent place in the *répertoire* of Parliamentary good things." \*

One of the latest observers of Parliamentary traits, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, thus states the weak points of Mr. Disraeli's oratory: "The Prime Minister is a successful parliamentary speaker, but his oratorical merits do not range higher. He lacks two qualities without which true eloquence is impossible—to wit, earnestness and sincere conviction. It is only on the rarest occasions that Mr. Disraeli even affects to be righteously roused; and then he is rather amusing than otherwise. He has a lively fancy, and an art, highly and carefully cultivated, of coining polished phrases, generally personal in their bearing. When these are flashed forth, he carries the House with him; but for the rest he is even dull. Just as the merits of the pudding at a school dinner are gauged by the frequency of the plums which occur in a slice, so is the success of Mr. Disraeli's speeches measured by the number of sparkling sentences distributed throughout an oration. The plums are of the best, but the pudding is unques-

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\* T. H. S. Escott, in *Fraser's Magazine*, Oct., 1874.

tionably heavy ; and of course the actual quantity of the latter is immeasurably greater than that of the former. There are, to tell the truth, few things more dreary in the experience of a session in the House of Commons than a long speech from Mr. Disraeli. At short, sharp replies or interrogations, he is supremely effective ; but when it comes to a long speech, the lack of stamina manifests itself, and we have something which, if not occasionally incomprehensible, is often involved. To cite an instance which will be within the personal recollection of readers,—was any one able to follow Mr. Disraeli through that argument about indirect and direct taxation, with special reference to the income tax, with which he, a fortnight before the dissolution, bewildered the farmers at Aylesbury, after having dined with them at their ordinary ? He himself evidently staggered under the unwonted weight of the argument, and finally hustled it off his shoulders, returning with a sense of relief, in which his audience shared, to a lighter style.

“No one has more accurately gauged Mr. Disraeli’s especial abilities than has Mr. Disraeli himself, and he is at his best when, by reason of fortunate circumstances, he is so powerful that he can act untrammelled by foreign influence. We see proof of this in the matter of making long speeches. Whilst he was in opposition, the leader of a party which never loved him, and to which he is linked by bonds of sympathy that are on both sides artificial, he occasionally felt it incumbent upon him to make long speeches. Mr. Gladstone had filled the House for two hours or more with a flood of oratory, and it seemed to some of the more intelligent of Conservatives that ‘the

party' were not fairly treated, and did not by comparison shine, if their leader uttered only half as many words and occupied the attention of the House for but one moiety of the time engrossed by the other side. Mr. Disraeli, answering gallantly to the impulse of the spur, has, under these circumstances, spoken for two hours or even more, with the result of greatly weakening his argument, and damaging his cause and his reputation. Since his advent to power at the head of a great majority, he has felt himself to be above dictation, and the result has been, that although the necessity for his making set speeches has increased, he never makes a long one. During the session of 1874, there were some momentous debates, in which the Premier interposed to state the views and intentions of the Government; but on no occasion did he speak at so much as an hour's length, and the majority of his speeches did not occupy more than half an hour in the delivery. What was, take it for all in all, perhaps the cleverest speech he ever delivered, that in the Home Rule debate, was commenced and brought to a conclusion within the space of three quarters of an hour. The consequence of this freedom to follow the bent of his genius is recorded in the unanimous verdict of the journals sitting in judgment on the session—that never in his long career did Mr. Disraeli shine more brilliantly in debate."\*

It is generally admitted that during his present term of power Mr. Disraeli's oratory, whether it has changed in quality or not, has been intentionally diminished in quantity.

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," pp. 39-42.

“ In the late Parliament ‘ the Talker ’ was by far the most prominent and the most largely represented individual type in the House of Commons. This was owing in a great measure, as has been hinted, to the force of the example set by the Leader. Mr. Gladstone not only talked frequently himself, but was the cause of frequent talking in others. Mr. Disraeli, on the contrary, never speaks when a speech can be dispensed with, and his personal influence is so paramount that whilst some of his official colleagues were known in the late Parliament as amongst the most wearisome Talkers in the House, they are now notable for the brevity with which they make explanations, answer questions, or urge arguments.”\*

Another sharp critic testifies yet more emphatically to the same point :

“ Mr. Disraeli is often bombastic, often enigmatical, but he is never circumlocutory. \* \* \* If a question is put to him, he either replies at once affirmatively or negatively, as the case may be, or lets his questioner understand, in as few words as possible, that the subject is one on which he declines to give any information. He is humorous or contemptuous ; he administers a snub, or he lanches an epigram ; he is solemn or he is flippant ; but he is always terse and sententious. Silence wherever silence is possible, and if not silence, a pregnant brevity, is the lesson which Mr. Disraeli perpetually labors by his own example to inculcate upon his followers. He has not been unsuccessful. If an analysis were made of the time devoted by members of the House of Commons to debate last session, it would

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\* “ Men and Manner in Parliament,” p. 172.

be found that Liberal garrulity stood to Conservative chatter in the ratio of three to one. It would be also found that, whereas, under the Liberal *régime*, the political general left nothing, or scarcely anything, for his lieutenant to discharge, Mr. Disraeli has religiously avoided opening his lips in the House of Commons, whenever he could secure the vicarious performance of the task." \*

#### MR. DISRAELI AS A PARTY LEADER.

It is generally agreed that the House of Commons has undergone a great transformation under its present leader. In Mr. Gladstone's time it "breathed an electrical atmosphere," from the intense earnestness of its leader. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* has said of the present House that it is, "except in matters affecting religious belief, a sober, business-like assembly, that comes down to get a certain amount of work performed, and is chiefly concerned to run through it as quickly as possible, and 'go home to bed.' For this marked alteration in demeanor the change in the *personnel* of the Ministry is undoubtedly principally accountable. It is impossible to conceive a more complete contrast than that presented by the principal men in the late and the present Governments. Mr. Disraeli *vice* Mr. Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote *vice* Mr. Lowe, Mr. Hardy *vice* Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Ward Hunt *vice* Mr. Goschen, Lord George Hamilton *vice* Mr. Grant Duff, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach *vice* the Marquis of Hartington, Mr. Cross *vice* Mr. Bruce, Lord Henry Lennox *vice* Mr. Ayrton! Is not

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\* "*Fraser's Magazine*," October, 1874.

the marshaling of these names a chapter in itself? Both the men and the circumstances under which public affairs are administered are radically the opposites of each other. All Mr. Gladstone's colleagues were stars, and all his undertakings heroic. Mr. Disraeli appears to have so selected the bulk of his colleagues that he might paraphrase the famous boast attributed to Lord Brougham, — 'The Whigs are all ciphers, and I am the only unit in the cabinet that gives a value to them.' He has been content to surround himself with men of whom, as individuals, no great things are expected, and his policy upon taking office, a policy approved by a nation somewhat wearied out by the rack of expectancy upon which it had been stretched for the preceding five years, was to do nothing in a manner as harmless and as pleasant a manner as possible.

'Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us—

(including the Irish Church revenues, the right of the Irish landlord to do what he liked with his own, the privilege of purchase in the army, the right to know how our dependents vote, and virtually, the control of the education of our poorer neighbors' children)—

'All things are taken from us and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?'

This slumberous, petulant murmur of the Lotos-eaters expresses fairly enough the spirit of the Ministry when first seated on the Treasury Bench, and up to within the last six weeks of the close of the session, it succeeded in pervading the House of Commons in a manner marvelous to behold.

“For such a policy as is herein indicated Mr. Disraeli is a Heaven-born leader. He possesses in a remarkable degree the great gift of silence, which is absolutely requisite in a Minister leading the House of Commons in epochs like that which succeeded the vigorous and soaring government of Mr. Gladstone. It has always been the fatal fault of Mr. Gladstone, regarded as a Parliamentary leader, that he could not from time to time sit still and say nothing. Mr. Disraeli can, and the advantage he has hereby occasionally gained over his great rival has been enormous. There is a passage in ‘Coningsby’—a book which opens more windows looking on the soul of Mr. Disraeli than are to be found in all his other utterances bound in a volume—which recurs to the mind in a study of the Premier as a Parliamentary leader. ‘A leader who can inspire enthusiasm,’ says the author, ‘he commands the world. Divine faculty! Rare and incomparable privilege! A Parliamentary leader who possesses it doubles his majority; and he who has it not may shroud himself in artificial reserve, but he will nevertheless be as far from controlling the spirit as from captivating the hearts of his sullen followers.’ The preface to the volume in which this passage occurs is dated exactly thirty years ago. ‘May-day, 1844,’ wrote Mr. Disraeli, little dreaming how a quarter of a century later this curious fashion of dating epistles should, in the case of ‘Maundy Thursday,’ create quite a sensation throughout

the empire, and lead to the penning of innumerable leading articles. Mr. Disraeli was at the period a young man, shining in Parliament and society, it is true, but with a glittering, uncertain light that did not inspire in the mind of the unprejudiced beholder any confidence in its continuance. Like his own Coningsby, he had a circle of attached friends, 'all men whose position forced them into public life,' forming 'a nucleus of honor, faith, and power,' and lacking only a leader who would 'dare.' It is conceivable that at this epoch Mr. Disraeli set out with the hope of 'inspiring enthusiasm,' and so 'commanding the world.' The effort, if made, is one in which he conspicuously failed, and in the picture he drew thirty years ago of the leader shrouding himself in artificial reserve, we have a curiously exact portrait of himself, whilst he sketches Mr. Gladstone in the opposite panel."\*

"He is a great party leader. That is beyond dispute. To him belongs the honor of having, with an exquisite tact and skill, led the House of Commons, when he had only a minority of supporters at his back, and of having led it in such a way that the most watchful of foes were unable to trip him up, or even to change the secretly-formed purpose of his mind. Those who saw him first as Chancellor of the Exchequer, then as Prime Minister during the last Conservative Administration, leading his party and the House of Commons at the same time, witnessed a spectacle, the like of which has perhaps never been seen before; for we have no previous record of such generalship as that which Mr. Disraeli then displayed.

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, pp. 74-78.

“The writer, when watching him during that eventful period, was curiously enough constantly reminded of a line in Cowper’s well-known hymn, for if ever a man seemed to ‘ride upon the storm’ of party politics, to be above it, and superior to its fury, it was Mr. Disraeli. Once and again there was mutiny in the ranks of his own party : as a minister he could have cried with the Psalmist against his own familiar friend in whom he trusted ; opposite to him was a foe bent upon mischief, superior in numbers, and led by a man who, with many great and noble qualities of his own, has never once during a long career been betrayed into the weakness of an act savoring of tenderness towards his brilliant rival. From this man Mr. Disraeli had to look for nothing but the most uncompromising and relentless opposition—and he knew it. He was himself engaged in a task which, to the most sanguine of his own followers, had but a short time before seemed an utterly hopeless one, and which, to those of them who were unable to see as far as he did, seemed worse than hopeless—suicidal.

“But he went on, in spite of difficulties and discouragements which would have broken the spirit and destroyed the strength of any other party leader of modern times. And he went on with wonderful success. Past rocks and shoals, and quicksands, without number, and by a channel on which it had never before entered, he steered the vessel of the State ; he faced obstacles which seemed insurmountable, and which to any other man would have been what they seemed, and lo ! they vanished away under his marvellous manipulation ; with a party sorely reduced in strength, he kept at bay the overwhelming numbers of the

enemy ; nay, he even used them as instruments of his own, and it was by their aid that he passed the great measure which will henceforth be associated with his name, and balked his eager rivals. This is what Mr. Disraeli has accomplished within the last few years ; and no impartial man will deny that it is one of the greatest political achievements recorded in the history of Parliament.

“It was during the trying period between 1866–9 that he developed his ripest powers. Until he became leader of the House of Commons on the last occasion, he had never shown his remarkable fitness for such a post. On previous occasions he had done well ; but then he did his work superlatively well. It is true that when he had formerly been leader of the House he had labored under the disadvantage of having opposed to him the skilled veteran who was the most popular party man ever seated within the walls of Parliament.

“But making allowances for the difference in his position which was made by Lord Palmerston’s death, we yet cannot doubt that there was a ripening and maturing of his powers during the long interval of opposition through which he passed whilst that nobleman and Lord Russell were at the helm of the State for the last time, which contributed materially to his success when he himself was recalled to the leadership. It was not until he was recalled, that in addition to all his other great qualities, he displayed that geniality and humor which the House of Commons is so quick to appreciate in its leader, and the absence of which in the present Prime Minister it feels so strongly.

“It is the parrot-cry of those who criticise Mr. Disraeli’s

character, to say that, despite his wonderful genius, he is incapable of appreciating the peculiarities, the weaknesses if you will, of the character of the average English gentleman. What better answer can there be to this charge, so constantly brought against him, than to point to the way in which he has made himself master of the greatest weakness of the House of Commons—its love of a good laugh? During his Premiership, despite all that there was to worry and annoy him, he kept the House of Commons in good temper by his constant use of an unflagging and unfailing humor. He put down bores, or he silenced awkward questions, with one of those happy phrases or pleasant jests which Lord Palmerston loved so dearly, and which did so much to smooth the path of that great statesman whilst he was at the head of affairs. It seems a very small thing, this ability to cope successfully with the bores of the House of Commons, but no one who has studied the science of party government will regard it with contempt.

“Mr. Disraeli is perhaps never so happy as when he is putting down one of those terrible children of Parliament who *will* know everything, and who *will* ask their questions, or air their most recently-acquired knowledge at the most inappropriate moment. Who, for instance, has forgotten the way in which he met Mr. Darby Griffith, when that hon. gentleman had put a question which looked like ‘a poser?’ Amongst the bores Mr. Griffith is, or rather was, *facile princeps*; and at times, by the very perseverance of his boring, he has wormed some secrets out of unwilling Governments. But when Mr. Disraeli, instead of giving him the information for which he asked, got up, and in that airy, off-hand manner that sits so well upon him, con-

gratulated the member for Devizes upon the possession of a 'luminous intellect,' the House was so delighted with the saying that it gave the Minister full liberty to sit down, and leave Mr. Griffith to digest the unexpected compliment—if he could.

"And somewhat akin to this humor is that higher power of sarcasm for which Mr. Disraeli has been famous throughout his whole public life. He is not, in one sense of the word, a good debater. It cannot be denied that at times he contrasts unfavorably with Mr. Gladstone. But upon some subjects he makes speeches which are far above the level reached by any other man in the House of Commons. No one has the power of investing a great political event with more of the interest attaching to domestic affairs than he has. Over and over again he has brought down incidents, which were so far above the ordinary level of the House of Commons as to be beyond the reach of its sympathy, to the region of every-day life; as, for instance, in the case of Mr. Lincoln's assassination, when he made *the* speech of all the speeches made the world over upon that most terrible and most touching of tragedies, and brought tears into the eyes of men to whom before that moment the President of the United States had been a mere abstraction."\*

The speech in question—delivered May 1, 1865, in seconding the motion of Sir George Grey for an address to the Queen, expressing the sorrow and indignation of the House of Commons on the assassination of Mr. Lincoln—is here given in full. If it does not quite justify the un-

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 5.

bounded enthusiasm of the author just quoted, it certainly should give to Americans a permanent feeling of kindness toward the statesman who made it :

"Mr. Disraeli : Sir, there are rare instances when the sympathy of a nation approaches those tenderer feelings that, generally speaking, are supposed to be peculiar to the individual, and to form the happy privilege of private life ; and this is one.

"Under all circumstances we should have bewailed the catastrophe at Washington, under all circumstances we should have shuddered at the means by which it was accomplished. But in the character of the victim, and even in the accessories of his last moment, there is something so homely and so innocent that it takes, as it were, the subject out of all the pomp of history and the ceremonial of diplomacy ; it touches the heart of nations, and appeals to the domestic sentiment of mankind.

"Sir, whatever the various and varying opinions in this House and the country generally on the policy of the late President of the United States, on this, I think, all must agree, that in one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man, he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength. Nor is it possible for the people of England, at such a moment, to forget that he sprang from the same fatherland and spoke the same mother-tongue.

"When such crimes are perpetrated the public mind is apt to fall into gloom and perplexity ; for it is ignorant alike of the causes and the consequences of such deeds. But it is one of our duties to reassure the country under unreasoning panic or despondency. Assassination has never changed the history of the world. I will not refer to the remote past, although an accident has made the most memorable example of antiquity at this moment fresh in the mind and memory of all present. But even the costly sacrifice of a Cæsar did not propitiate the inexorable destiny of his country. If we look to modern times, to times at least with the feelings of which we are familiar, and the people of which were animated and influenced by the same interests as ourselves, the violent deaths of two heroic men,

Henry IV., of France, and the Prince of Orange, are conspicuous illustrations of this truth.

"In expressing our unaffected and profound sympathy with the citizens of the United States at the untimely end of their elected Chief, let us not, therefore, sanction any feeling of depression, but rather let us express a fervent hope, that from out the awful trials of the last four years, of which not the least is this violent demise, the various populations of North America may issue elevated and chastened ; rich in that accumulated wisdom, and strong in that disciplined energy which a young nation can only acquire in a protracted and perilous struggle. Then they will be enabled not merely to renew their career of power and prosperity, but they will renew it to contribute to the general happiness of mankind. It is with these feelings, Sir, that I now second the Address to the Crown." \*

#### MR. DISRAELI AS A STATESMAN.

As the late leader of the Liberal party of England began with being the hope of "the stern and unbending Tories," so the present Conservative Premier was at first denounced as a Radical. He was described, thirty years ago, as "Mr. Disraeli, who has now been thirteen years more or less prominently before the public, either as an ultra-Radical, seeking to be a joint of O'Connell's tail ; as a Liberal, seeking to be elected for a Liberal constituency under the auspices of Sir E. L. Bulwer ; or as an ultra-Tory, or Tory-Radical, actually representing Shrewsbury."

"Marvelous dexterity in manipulating a question, and wonderful skill in seizing every advantage offered by the enemy, though they make a man a great party leader, do not necessarily make him a great statesman. We believe, as

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\* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," 3d ser., Vol. 178, p. 1246.

we have already said, that Mr. Disraeli has the faculty of statesmanship in a very high degree ; but it is nevertheless manifest that he has at times shown rather too strong a bias in favor of expediency, and has sacrificed what his party believed to be great principles in order to secure for them a temporary advantage. But it is always open to dispute whether he was not perfectly justified in taking the course he followed on such occasions. We have not yet reached the end of the political history of England, and a good many very acute Liberals are inclined to the belief that Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, for instance, instead of destroying the Conservative party, saved it from destruction, and opened for it a new career. Time only can solve this question ; but whilst it remains in doubt it is unfair to regard it as finally settled against Mr. Disraeli ; and on the question of the practical capacity as a party leader which Mr. Disraeli displayed in this transaction, there cannot be even the shadow of a doubt.\*

"There is but one instance which need be quoted to show that he *does* possess, in a very high degree, the foresight and the accuracy of judgment which are necessary to make a man a really great statesman. Need we say that we allude to the question of the American war. Upon that topic we are nearly all in the wrong — all but Mr. Disraeli. Lord Palmerston — clever, experienced, worldly wise old man as he was — would have gone in unhesitatingly for a recognition of the Southern States. Earl Russell declared that we saw in the new world that which we had so often seen in the old — a war on the one side for empire, and on the other side

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 15.

for independence. Mr. Gladstone was bursting with zeal—even when official restraints ought to have tied his tongue—on behalf of Mr. Davis, and ‘the nation’ he had made.

“Mr. Disraeli was in opposition, and therefore at liberty to act entirely in accordance with his own sympathies; his party were almost to a man the enthusiastic adherents of the South. It would have seemed, to an ordinarily acute person, that the safest and most profitable game he could possibly have played would have been that of the Confederacy. But Mr. Disraeli himself knew better. A cool judgment and a clear foresight had led him to see the inevitable end. He was beyond his own party, beyond his colleagues, beyond his rivals, in the prescience which enabled him to see what the results of the American war would be; and whilst we believe that this statesmanlike sagacity did much to save England at the time from immeasurable evils, we cannot but deplore the fact that those who are put forward as his superiors in statesmanship did not in this instance show that they possessed it in something like the same degree. Had they done so, we should not now have had an ‘American difficulty to contend with.’”\*

#### MR. DISRAELI AS AN AUTHOR.

It is rarely that an author “wakes up and finds himself famous” through a single book. In the extraordinary career of Mr. Disraeli, he has thrice had this experience; first with “Vivian Grey,” in 1826; then with “Coningsby,” in 1844; then with “Lothair,” in 1870.

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\* “Cabinet Portraits, p. 12.

Those who read in their college-days the first of these remarkable novels—even many years after its publication—can vividly recall its peculiar fascination. It offered a picture of all that is most exciting to youth—love, romance, ambition, power—achieved by personal wit and daring alone. Those who read it were almost prepared, like Poe's hero in his delirium, to find "beauties in Vivian Grey—more than beauties in Vivian Grey—profundity in Vivian Grey—everything in Vivian Grey."

Then came *Coningsby*. In 1844, as Wemyss Reid justly says, "everybody read '*Coningsby*,' and everybody talked about it. A few praised, and many abused the work. The critics lashed the author with more than their accustomed vigor, and the pamphlets and 'advertisements' published against both author and book helped to keep up the excitement. Nay, to such an extent did it go, that some gentleman—apparently an ambitious journalist—followed up the original work by a caricature, which, under the title of '*Anti-Coningsby*,' met with a very moderate success.

"How was it that this story of a young man's experience in the great world of fashion and politics produced so deep and wide-spread a sensation? The explanation is a simple one. It was not the plot, or the style, or the wit, or the polished sarcasm of the volume, which drew all readers to it. It was the fact that those who opened its pages believed that they found in them, drawn by a master's hand, sketches—caricatures if you like, photographs if you will—of the leading statesmen of the day. At first each reader exercised his own ingenuity, and his personal knowledge of the political world, in order to discover for

himself the identity of the various characters portrayed in the fiction.

"It was a pleasant and exciting task to discover the real name of the Marquis of Monmouth, of Mr. Jawster Sharp, or Mr. Rigby. The man who had hit upon the identity of any of these personages rushed off to his club with the conviction that he was a benefactor to his race, and hastened to pour his secret into the ears of his companions of the morning, or the smoking-room. Ere long, however, this process of individual exertion in the great task appeared to have unsatisfactory results, and then there appeared—what do our readers think?—a 'Key to Coningsby,' by which the dullest member of the world of fashion was enabled to see at a glance who was who in the fascinating and daring romance.

"Very curious is it to glance nowadays over one of these 'Keys' (for more than one appeared) to the political novel which 'B. Disraeli, Esq., M.P.' had given to the world. If they satisfy the reader of nothing else, they must at least convince him of the wonderful ingenuity of their authors. Everybody in 'Coningsby,' down even to 'Boots' at Eton, was shown to be somebody else. Sidonia, the wonderful Hebrew, who had 'mastered *all* arts, *all* languages, *all* sciences,' who had been everywhere and seen everything, and penetrated the hearts of everybody, was shown to the world as 'Baron Alfred de Rothschild of Naples;' Mr. Jawster Sharp was 'John Bright, Esq., M.P. ;' the Marquis of Monmouth was a nobleman whom Thackeray subsequently presented to the world under the title of Lord Steyne—the Marquis of Hertford; Coningsby himself was the amiable peer who is now known as Lord

Lyttelton ; Oswald Milbank, the twin hero of the story, was 'W. E. Gladstone, Esq., M.P.' (1) ; Vere was Lord Edward Howard ; and the infamous Rigby was — ; well, at this point the 'Keys' left a discreet blank, which the world immediately filled up with the name of Mr. J. Wilson Croker, for some time Secretary to the Admiralty. There was, of course, not a little reason to doubt the accuracy of these different keys."

Unluckily, as Mr. Disraeli had followed up "Vivian Grey" by "Contarini Fleming," so he followed up "Coningsby" by "Sibyl" and "Tancred," which were only dilutions of their original. Lowell, writing in those days his very first article—if I mistake not—for the review which he has since edited, denounced it in a strain more lively than was then familiar to the readers of the *North American Review*. "For our own part," he said, "we cannot see any use that is to be answered by such books as Tancred. It is as dumb as the poor choked hunchback in the Arabian Nights, when we ask what its business is. There are no characters in it. There is no dramatic interest, none of plot or incident. \* \* \* Moralists tell us that every man is bound to sustain his share in the weight of the world's sorrows and trials, and we honestly feel as if we had done our part in reading 'Tancred.'"\*

Other works of imagination by Mr. Disraeli were "The Voyage of Captain Popanilla" (1828), "The Young Duke" (1831), "Alroy, the Wondrous Tale" (1833), "The Revolutionary Epick" (1834), "Henrietta Temple" (1836), and "Venetia" (1837). He wrote also "Lord

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\* *N. A. Review*, lxx. 223.

George Bentinck, a Political Biography," which appeared in 1852. But his audacious pen had been for many years silent when "Lothair" appeared, in 1870. Its success in respect to circulation was enormous, but opinions are still divided as to whether its assumed deference for rank and station is to be regarded as genuine or as a satire. It is certain, that Bret Harte's amusing burlesque entitled "Lothaw" seems in these respects hardly an exaggeration of the original.

The author of "Political Portraits" sums up the career of Mr. Disraeli by declaring that he will be remembered when many wiser and greater men are forgotten. "To meet him in the long roll of English Prime Ministers is a perpetual surprise, something like that of encountering Saul among the prophets. \* \* \* It will be one of the standing jokes of history, as amusing to future students of the Victorian era as to us who have had the happiness to enjoy it at first hand. It supplies the vein of comedy which runs through a momentous epoch, as the frolics of Falstaff and Prince Henry lighten the intrigues and wars of Shakespeare's chronicle plays. It is not likely to be forgotten, since what is great often attracts attention less than what is curious. A paradox, however trivial, an unsettled point, however trumpery—the sex of the Chevalier d'Eon, or the authorship of the Letters of Junius—engage men more than an important but unperplexing truth. Mr. Disraeli is a curious puzzle. Nobody ever mentions his name without a smile; nobody hears it without a corresponding smile. It awakens that sense of incongruity in the perception of which we are told that humor consists. Among the staid respectabilities of English politics, Mr. Disraeli is

as Fine at Court or turned duenna. In one sense this is to Mr. Disraeli's credit. It shows that he has had the courage to be himself, and has not shaped his nature upon any conventional model. He has spoken and acted according to his disposition, and brought forth works and deeds after his kind. He has not suppressed or pared away his individuality into commonplace."

"\* \* \* \* Mr. Disraeli's Premiership is remarkable chiefly for the fact that he was Prime Minister. His career yields the moral of the Industrious Apprentice and of books on self-help, showing that by resolution and capacity a man may become not only a Lord Mayor, a Lord Chancellor, or an Archbishop of Canterbury, but even a Prime Minister, in spite of obstacles seemingly insuperable." \*

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 23, 38.



### III.

## MR. BRIGHT.

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#### MR. BRIGHT'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

“ **G**ENUINE SAXON, by the soul of Hengist !’ was the exulting shout of Cedric [in *Ivanhoe*] on hearing the name of a Saxon knight who had been victor in the lists. ‘Genuine Saxon’ will be the exclamation of every critical listener to Mr. Bright. His look, his tone, his choice of word and illustrations, his stubborn independence, his boldness, his pugnacity, are all redolent of race.” \*

“Within the last few years the art of photography has made Mr. Bright’s features so well known to his fellow-countrymen, that it is no exaggeration to say that he can go nowhere within the limits of the United Kingdom without being recognized. It has been the lot of the writer to see the member for Birmingham stared after by every third man he passed in Regent Street on a summer afternoon ; surrounded by an admiring but respectful

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\* A. Hayward, in *London Quarterly*, April, 1872.

group on the deck of one of the Holyhead and Kingstown steamboats ; greeted with enthusiastic cheers when accidentally detected on the platform of a Scotch wayside station ; and followed with glances of affectionate pride as he sturdily strode through the crowded Market Street of Manchester, 'the city of his love.' \* \* \* \*

"A great many men have been, from time to time, pointed out as the handsomest members of the House of Commons. There is, no doubt, very great difference of taste in deciding what men are personally handsome and what men are not ; and some of those who have enjoyed for a twelvemonth the palm of beauty in our great representative assembly have, in our eyes at least, had no claim whatever to that distinction. It is a pure matter of taste ; and we may be altogether in the wrong, yet it seems to us that John Bright is *the* handsomest man in Parliament. His figure, it is true, is heavy and unwieldy ; he barely reaches middle height, and of late years he has become very stout ; but his broad, yet lofty forehead, firm, clean-cut mouth, and, above all, the wonderfully fine eyes which can flash fire or shed tears at will, seem to us to make up a countenance possessing the highest kind of manly beauty.

"Within the last few years a transformation, too, has taken place in his appearance, which has been in one sense a great improvement. Within that period his hair has turned from an iron-gray to a pure white, so that now there is something venerable about his outward aspect, leonine though it is, withal." \*

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 59, 60.

## MR. BRIGHT'S ORIGIN AND PUBLIC CAREER.

John Bright was born November 16, 1811, at Greenbank, Rochdale, England, the residence of his father, Jacob Bright, a cotton spinner and manufacturer. After an ordinary school training, he was placed at fifteen in his father's counting-house. Except during a visit to the Continent in 1835, his life for twelve years was one of entire devotion to his business.

"He has himself told the world how, when he was staying at Cheltenham, as a young man, stricken down by the sorest blow which fate can inflict, with none living of his household save a motherless child, Richard Cobden came to him and urged him to join in the struggle for Free Trade. The man whose whole life had been darkened shook his head sadly, and would have turned from the prospect which his friend held out to him. Then Cobden besought him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the English poor, to 'come with him,' and win cheap bread for the people; and at this Bright yielded, and they went out upon that wonderful campaign in which many faults were, no doubt, committed upon both sides; but in which, as time has shown, a splendid victory was won for the people of this realm."

It was during this corn-law campaign that his remarkable powers of argument and persuasion first became manifest. In the words of a contemporary writer: "While Mr. Cobden lent his calm and unanswerable logic to the cause, Mr. Bright gave it the impetus of zeal and passion. The one sapped the foundations of economic error, the other battered at its walls. The one convinced his opponents,

the other carried them away captive ; and both rendered such efficient service as to make it difficult to say which was the most useful or the most powerful. Public meetings were held in every part of the British kingdom ; newspapers were established in the interest of the agitation ; wherever there was a possibility of success, the country was deluged with pamphlets ; eminent men entered the ranks, but towering high above them all were the names of Cobden and Bright. The speeches of the latter were of the most effective description, and thoroughly English in manner as well as in phrasology. Powerful and impassioned, he so won his auditors that even those who opposed his theories were compelled to admire his genius."

He was nominated to Parliament for Durham, under the auspices of the Anti-Corn-Law League, in the year 1843, but failed. His successful opponent was unseated for bribery, and on a second trial, the same year, Mr. Bright was returned a member. He at once became the ally of Mr. Cobden, who had entered Parliament two years earlier. Their main object was the repeal of the Corn Laws ; and they afterward co-operated in other reforms. In 1847 Mr. Bright became a member for Manchester, and was re-elected in 1852, but lost his seat in 1857, in consequence of his opposition to the war policy of the Government. He was, however, returned from Birmingham during the same year, and has remained in Parliament ever since. He took office for the first and only time during Mr. Gladstone's last administration, becoming in December, 1868, President of the Board of Trade, and being the first Quaker who ever held a Cabinet office in England. He resigned in 1870, however, his health failing ; and during the

last few years he has been rarely seen in his seat in Parliament.

Mr. Bright has been twice married; first in 1839, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Jonathan Priestman, Esq., of Benwell House, Newcastle-on-Tyne. She died in 1841, and he was a second time married, in 1847, to Margaret Elizabeth, eldest daughter of William Leatham, Esq., of Heath, near Wakefield, in Yorkshire. He is the father of several children by the last marriage. "When I get home from this House," he said, in 1863, in Parliament, "I find half a dozen children playing upon my hearth."

#### MR. BRIGHT AS AN ORATOR.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, speaking of Mr. Bright's published speeches, goes so far as to say, "We doubt if our language possesses a record of any speeches, really spoken, which are superior to them."

"During three years," writes the critic of the *Daily News*, "Mr. Bright has been an involuntary absentee from Parliamentary life. 'I shall not know the House of Commons without Sir Robert Peel,' said Macaulay, when his re-election for Edinburgh restored him to his old place there. The Reformed House of Commons has scarcely been itself without Mr. Bright. His accustomed seat below the gangway has lacked him, and his absence was even less conspicuous when his place was empty than when it was filled by some veteran Leaguer, or some perfervid Home Ruler from the upper benches. The portly figure and the lion-like head caught the glance of all strangers; and 'Bright' was pointed out with pride by the habitués

or the attendants of the place. The time is probably approaching when he will be seen there again ; when visitors will comment on the sharp, decisive gestures with which the member for Birmingham accompanied his talk to his neighbor ; and watch for the quick, nervous glance toward the Chair, and the slight movement which seldom failed to catch at once the eye of the Speaker, and to arrest the attention of the House, as he rose to take part in the debate. Whatever differences of opinion might exist in the House of Commons with respect to Mr. Bright as a politician, there never was any question as to his consummate ability as an orator. The emptiest House—if perchance he rose in an empty House, which he was seldom prone to do—speedily filled when he was known to be on his legs. Beginning in low and measured tones, with a sort of conversational hesitation in the opening sentences, he speedily rose to animation. The first condition of his success was this—that business was the backbone of his speeches. They were always animated by a purpose which was clear to himself, and which he never failed to make clear to his hearers. No one could fail to know what he was driving at.

“Though essentially a plain speaker, both in the literary and in the moral meaning of the phrase, there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that he is (if one may still speak in the present tense) a rude or unpolished one. In one sense, he is the most cultivated speaker in the House of Commons, inasmuch as he has most elaborately and successfully trained his natural gifts of eloquence. A presence which fills the eye, a voice which at once takes the ear, and a slow and deliberate utterance which seems to choose the

best word, and to watch its effect in order that he may so choose and place the next as to heighten, or, if need be, to soften and qualify the impression of the first, compel attention and interest. Mr. Bright's power of convincing does not lie so much in strict logic—he does not often affect the forms of logic, though his speeches never want the substance of it—as in the submission of the essential elements of a question to sagacious common sense and right feeling. Nothing can be better fitted than his words to his thought. The best answer to the imputation that he is un-English in character might, perhaps, be found in his language, which is more thoroughly and racily English than that of any speaker in either House. It combines, in happy blending, alike the simple and the dignified elements of our tongue. Mr. Bright, if he has not as much wit as Mr. Disraeli, has a great deal more humor; he has as much earnestness as Mr. Gladstone, with more self-possession; and he has a simplicity of pathos, and an occasional grandeur, scorn, and indignation, which belong to neither. No orator has contributed to the public stock more images and phrases that will live than Mr. Bright. Mr. Disraeli as the mountebank, with a pill for the earthquake, and Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman as the Scotch terrier party of which no one could tell the head from the tail, belong now to history as completely as the Adullamites and the fancy franchises to our political vocabulary. Few things finer have ever been uttered by any orator than Mr. Bright's appeal to the rival leaders to lay aside their animosities in order to seek a remedy for the wrongs of Ireland, than the passage in which he described the angel of death visiting the homes to be desolated by the Crimean war, or than the

moral dignity of the sentences in which he vindicated his own career at Birmingham." \*

" 'The greatest orator of his time' is the verdict which posterity will unhesitatingly pronounce upon John Bright. Whatever his rank may be as a statesman—and upon that point opinions differ widely—there can be, and there will be no doubt as to his claim to the foremost place amongst those who have given the English House of Commons a reputation for eloquence possessed by no other modern legislative assembly.

"Those who have heard him most frequently, and those who are the best able to criticise his oratory, have formed the highest opinion of it. It is something which no words can adequately describe; something which must be felt to be appreciated; but yet something which men of all parties, and of all shades of opinion, regard with an admiration which almost approaches to veneration.

"One of the keenest and most skillful Parliamentary critics of the day, a man who constantly opposes Mr. Bright's views on public policy, and almost scoffs at the idea that he should claim to be a statesman, has likened him, as an orator, to a Hebrew poet or leader—to a Moses, a David, or an Isaiah—simply because he looks upon him as being all but inspired, when he is giving utterance to one of those magnificent orations which we believe are destined to form part of the deathless literature of our country." †

"His manner, when speaking, is quiet and subdued, but it is the apparent subjugation which a bar of iron under-

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 59-62.

† "Cabinet Portraits," p. 58.

goes when it passes from the red-hot stage to the condition of white-heat. The red-hot bar splutters and sends forth sparks, and is, on the whole, the more imposing to the passing glance. But there are more heat and power in the quiet-looking bar that steadfastly burns, content, without calling attention to the process, by occasionally spluttering forth an ineffectual shower of sparks. In the course of a speech Mr. Bright generally manages to say some things damaging to his opponents and helpful to the cause he advocates. But when he sits down, there is invariably a feeling amongst his audience that he has by no means exhausted himself, but could, if he pleased, have said a great deal more that would have been equally effectual. To this end his quiet, self-possessed manner greatly tends. He has himself well in hand throughout his orations, and therefore maintains his hold upon his audience. His gestures are of the fewest ; but, unlike Mr. Disraeli's, they always seem appropriate and natural. A simple wave of the right hand, and the sentence is emphasized. Nature has gifted him with a fine presence and a voice the like of which has but rarely rung through the rafters of St. Stephen's. 'Like a bell' is the illustration usually employed in the endeavor to convey by words an impression of its music. But I think it were better to say 'like a peal of bells,' for a single one could not produce the varied tones in which Mr. Bright suits his expressions to his theme. On the whole, the dominant note is one of pathos. Possibly because nearly all Mr. Bright's great speeches have been made when he has been pleading the cause of the oppressed or denouncing a threatened wrong, a tone of melancholy can be heard running through all. And for

the expression of pathos, there are marvelously touching tones in his voice, tones which carry right to the listener's heart the tender thoughts that come glowing from the speaker's and are clad in simple words as they pass his tongue."\*

"When a French statesman, conversing with Pitt, expressed his astonishment at the influence of Fox upon the House of Commons, the great Commoner replied, 'Ah, you have not been under the wand of the magician.' And it is only those who have been 'under the wand of the magician' who can fully appreciate and understand the marvellous personal power of the man who was for many years regarded by one half of his fellow countrymen as a mere demagogue, removed but a single degree from the condition of a social outcast.

"We have seen him thrill to tears, or rouse to shouts of applause the like of which we never heard before, a rough Lancashire audience of eight or nine thousand persons, packed within one of the great mills at Rochdale; and in the House of Commons we have heard him speak for an hour at a stretch, whilst every man in the building listened with breathless attention, and the cheers that broke out at the end of every sentence came almost as much from the one side of the House as from the other. Nay, we have watched the faces of the men to whom is committed the government of the British Empire, and of the 'strangers' permitted to join with them, strangers including Princes of the Blood, peers of long descent, the ministers of foreign countries, and the leaders of the Church; we have

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\* "Men and Manners in Parliament," pp. 52, 53.

watched them, as slowly, word by word, he was rolling forth the magnificent peroration of one of his great speeches, and we have seen upon their countenances such a rapt, and almost awe-stricken expression, as—to return to the simile we mentioned at the beginning of this sketch—one might have expected to see on the faces of a Hebrew congregation before whom an Isaiah was delivering himself of his heaven-born visions.

“We cannot resist the temptation of transcribing this one ‘vision’ of the Member for Birmingham, which formed the peroration of a speech delivered at Birmingham, in 1862, on the subject of the American War, and the delivery of which will ever dwell, in the memories of those who heard it uttered, as one of the most wonderful incidents in their lives. ‘The leaders of this revolt,’ said he, after speaking for nearly two hours with regard to the war, ‘propose this monstrous thing—that over a territory forty times as large as England the blight and curse of slavery shall be forever perpetuated. I cannot believe, for my part, that such a fate will befall that fair land, stricken though it now is with the ravages of war. I cannot believe that civilization, in its journey with the sun, will sink into endless night, in order to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who seek to

‘Wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.’

I have another and a far brighter vision before my gaze. It may be but a vision, but I will cherish it. I see one vast confederation, stretching from the frozen North in unbroken line to the glowing South, and from the wild

billows of the Atlantic westward to the calmer waters of the Pacific main—and I see one people, and one language, and one law, and one faith, and over all that wide continent the home of freedom, and a refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.'

"And yet, whilst the effect produced by Mr. Bright upon those who listen to him is wonderful, the first impression of those who hear him for the first time is one of disappointment. When he begins to speak to any audience, he generally opens his address in a low tone, pauses occasionally, as though to find a suitable word, and seems to have no idea whatever of rousing the enthusiasm of those who listen to him. Those who have taken with them preconceived notions of Mr. Bright, presenting him to their imaginations as a reckless demagogue, full of sound and fury, will hardly be able to recognize the great orator in the quiet and unimpassioned speaker who stands motionless before them, pouring forth a stream of noble Saxon words, the very simplicity and appropriateness of which rob the orator of a portion of the credit which is due to him.

"But presently, while the stranger is wondering at the infatuation of those who have placed upon the brows of this man the crown of eloquence, he is himself drawn within the circle of his influence, and, forgetting his preconceived notions, his subsequent disappointment and his whole theory of the art of oratory, he listens enchanted to the man who can put the most difficult questions so plainly before his audience, and in whose hands the driest subject becomes so interesting.

"Then, when the speaker has drawn the whole of his hearers into sympathy with him, he begins to work on their

emotions like a skillful player on the harp. And first he rouses the scorn of scorn in their hearts by a few simple words, which, when we read them in the morning, appear altogether innocent, but which, as he utters them, scathe the object of his wrath more terribly than the bitterest or most violent invective. Perhaps in nothing has Mr. Bright so much power as in his use of sarcasm. The manner in which, by a mere inflection of his voice, he can express the intensest scorn, and so express it as to make his feelings more completely known to his audience than if he spent an hour in trying to explain them, is simply marvellous. We remember one or two instances in which the mere tone of his voice has conveyed an impression of his boundless contempt for his adversaries which no language could have expressed half so well.

“ But almost directly after the audience has been stirred by the orator’s sarcasm, he begins in the calmest and most deliberate manner to tell some story. Mr. Bright is a wonderful story-teller, and some of the best anecdotes and illustrations that have been given to us in modern times have come from him. The story of the old gentleman, for instance, who used to say that ‘a hole wore longer than a patch,’ is worthy of being placed beside the history of Dame Partington ; and the old lady who ‘felt very badly in her inside,’ and the Syrian monk, to whom ‘tears were as natural as perspiration,’ are good examples of the ready wit with which he supplies every argument he employs with an appropriate illustration.

“ More notable examples of the same quality are to be found in that speech in which he christened the Adullamites, and added a new phrase—‘the Cave’—to the vocab-

ulary of party politics. The speech itself was a triumph of humor, nothing in it being more grotesquely irresistible than that never-to-be forgotten description of the 'party of two,' which bore so striking a resemblance to the young lady's terrier, 'which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it.'

"Perhaps none of Mr. Bright's qualities does so much to render him popular, as a speaker, both in the House of Commons and in the provinces, as his humor. And one peculiarity of his humor is, that it always appears to be unconscious. When he is telling one of his best stories, or uttering one of his best sayings, he hardly moves a muscle of his face, and seemingly takes no share in the merriment of his audience.

"It is almost unfortunate that he draws so many of his illustrations from a book which, in certain circles, is nowadays going somewhat out of fashion. There are, however, good reasons why Mr. Bright should indulge as sparingly as possible in classical quotations, which, as they reflect discredit upon no one, need not be concealed here. In the course of instruction at the Quaker schools and colleges where he received the whole of his education, no place is found for the classics. The study of the dead languages is deemed a mere weakness and vanity by the sect of which he is a member, and so it happens that the great English orator has never enjoyed the advantages of reading, in the original tongue, the masterpieces of his rivals of Greece and Rome. That he has studied them as far as he could possibly do so by the help of translations is evident, and, indeed, he has himself more than once admitted the value of a classic model.

"If the rich stores of classical learning are, however, almost closed to him, he has made excellent use of those other fountains of knowledge which are open to his study. No other public man has such a command of all that is strong, and pure, and noble in the Saxon tongue, whilst few show a greater familiarity with our English classics—with the works of the poets and dramatists of the Elizabethan age, and their successors. All his greater speeches are illustrated by wonderfully apt and appropriate quotations, some from the Scriptures, and some from the standard authors of our country. No one who hears these quotations employed can imagine for a moment that they are the result of a resort to any 'Dictionary of Elegant Extracts,' or other work of the same kind. They show the orator's thorough familiarity with those authors who have done most for English literature. It is said, indeed, that Mr. Bright makes a habit of committing to memory the works of some one of our chief poets every year."\*

"Mr. Bright's humor," says another critic, "is not sardonic like Mr. Disraeli's, but it resembles it inasmuch as its manifestations have chiefly been in the direction of hitting off some person or party by a single phrase, in Mr. Bright's case containing a parallel or a comparison drawn from a source familiar to the least educated mind. Two at least of his happiest strokes of this sort have their inspiration from the Bible. Had Mr. Lowe wanted to say something damaging about Mr. Bright, he would, in all probability, have looked through his Homer or his Horace for an illustration. When Mr. Bright desired, during the

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 61-66.

debate on the Reform Bill, to cover with ridicule the clique of which Mr. Lowe was the head, he bethought him of David's escape from Achish, King of Gath, and the character of the people who subsequently foregathered with him in the Cave of Adullam, and a new name was added to the political vocabulary. When, pending the General Election, he had occasion to complain of the determined dissatisfaction of the Conservatives, he again turned to the classical book of the people, and on the morrow all England was laughing at the party who, 'if they had been in the wilderness, would have complained of the Ten Commandments as a harassing piece of legislation.' Mr. Bright's illustrations, when drawn from other sources, are equally homely, and, therefore, effective. Thus, when he dubbed Mr. Disraeli 'the mystery man of the Ministry,' and when he likened Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman to a Scotch terrier, 'of which no one could with certainty say which was the head and which the tail,' everybody could comprehend and enjoy the reference. The fearful sting contained in his casual remark about Sir Charles Adderly, in a letter to a correspondent who had brought under his notice a misrepresentation of fact which Sir Charles had permitted himself to indulge in - 'I hope he thought he was speaking the truth, but he is rather a dull man, and is liable to make blunders' - will be best appreciated by those who know the right honorable baronet. But the volume of sarcasm hidden in the parenthetical remark about the gentleman's ancestors who came over with the Conqueror - - 'I never heard that they did anything else' - is plain reading for all. So is the well merited retort upon a noble lord who, during a time when Mr. Bright was temporarily laid

aside by illness, took the opportunity of publicly declaring that, by way of punishment for the uses he had made of his talents, Providence had inflicted upon Mr. Bright a disease of the brain. 'It may be so,' said Mr. Bright to the House of Commons when he came back; 'but in any case, it will be some consolation to the friends and family of the noble lord to know that the disease is one which even Providence could not inflict upon him.'"\*

"The chief defect of Mr. Bright's oratory is a certain failure in variety both of thought and of manner. He lacks the sparkling fancy and vivacity of Sheridan and Caning. Those metaphors, blending poetry and philosophy with oratory, in which Burke's speeches abound, and which reveal depths of meaning and a delicacy of discrimination beyond the range of the proposition they enforce, have no counterpart in Mr. Bright's eloquence, which is often sombre, and, apart from the animation given to it by tone and gesture, slightly monotonous. The bitter and vehement things which Mr. Bright has sometimes said savor of the Puritanic temper, which is prone to confound error with willful wrong-doing, and to smite it as with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. There has been some controversy—a one-sided controversy of course—of a modern with an ancient author, on the nice question whether rhetoric may be better likened to the closed fist and logic to the open hand, or whether the illustration should be reversed? Mr. Bright's rhetoric, at least, has certainly a great deal of the clenched fist in it; and when it exhibits the open hand, it is usually to administer a slap in the face,

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," pp. 56-58.

He appears, occasionally, to have taken as much pains to conceal real moderation under a form of violence as other men have done to hide their violence under a mask of moderation. There has, however, been much exaggeration in the imputations made against him on this head. The extremest things which he has said may be paralleled in the language of his predecessors. In the days of the struggle of the first Reform Bill, Lord John Russell and Sir John Hobhouse used words as threatening as any employed by Mr. Bright; and the same might be said of Fox and Grey before them, to say nothing of the virulent abuse from Tory squires of which Mr. Bright himself has been the object. But the fact is, that Mr. Bright's antagonists have often read their own heated passions into his speeches; and some of them have had the candor to acknowledge that language which, in the newspaper reports and in the sharpness of conflict, appeared to be unjustifiably vehement, loses that character in the printed volume and in calm historic retrospect."\*

One of the passages oftenest quoted in illustration of the simple and commanding eloquence of Mr. Bright is the close of one of his speeches on the condition of Ireland. It ends as follows :

"The noble Lord (Palmerston), toward the conclusion of his speech, spoke of the cloud which rests at present over Ireland. It is a dark and heavy cloud, and its darkness extends over the feelings of men in all parts of the British Empire. But there is a consolation which we may all take to ourselves. An inspired king, and bard, and prophet, has left us words which are not only the expres-

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 64-66.

sion of a fact, but which we may take as the utterance of a prophecy. He says, 'To the upright their ariseth light in the darkness.' Let us try in this matter to be upright. Let us try to be just. That cloud will be dispelled. The dangers which surround us will vanish, and we may yet have the happiness of leaving to our children the heritage of an honorable citizenship in a united and prosperous empire."

But the most memorable of all Mr. Bright's speeches—that which produced the deepest impression on his hearers, and that which he is said to remember with the greatest personal pleasure—was his speech against the further prosecution of the Crimean war. Its most impressive passage, it is said, was this :

"I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born was slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on ; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and lowly, and it is in behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal."

The parliamentary critic of the *Gentleman's Magazine* says that no one who heard can forget those solemn sentences. It was "a bold oratorical flight to take in the House of Commons ; which is, above all things, practical, and kills by good hearty laughter any approach to mere sentimentality. \* \* \* 'If you had said the *flapping* of its wings,' said Mr. Cobden to Mr. Bright, as they

walked home together after the speech, 'we should have gone into a fit of laughter.' But Mr. Bright had selected the right word, had fitted it in the right place, and the true pathos of the tones in which the sentence was slowly spoken carried it far above the level of laughter." \*

But I confess that no extended piece of eloquence that ever came from Mr. Bright's lips is to me so impressive, at least in the reading, as those four sentences in which he bore witness to the House of the personal nobleness of Mr. Cobden. It was on April 3, 1865. Lord Palmerston had announced to the House the death of that eminent man, and had very warmly eulogized him; Mr. Disraeli had followed, speaking in language as strong. Mr. Bright was the only other speaker, and he spoke only these words :

"MR. BRIGHT:—*Sir* : I feel that I cannot address the House on this occasion ; but every expression of sympathy which I have heard has been most grateful to my heart. But the time which has elapsed since, in my presence, the manliest and gentlest spirit that ever quitted or tenanted a human form took its flight is so short, that I dare not even attempt to give utterance to the feelings by which I am oppressed. I shall leave to some calmer moment, when I may have the opportunity of speaking before some portion of my countrymen, the lesson which I think may be learned from the life and character of my friend. I have only to say that, after twenty years of most intimate and almost brotherly friendship with him, I little knew how much I loved him until I found that I had lost him." †

It seems to me that Ben Jonson's famous

"Wouldst thou hear what man can say  
In a little? Reader, stay!"

\* Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 54.

† Hansard, 3d ser., vol. 178, p. 677.

might fitly be prefaced to this brief passage ; and that it must rank with

“ Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,”

among the masterpieces of the English tongue.

#### MR. BRIGHT AS A STATESMAN.

In a speech by Mr. Bright on the Russian War, he disavowed, once for all, the claim of statesmanship. He then said :

“ I am not, nor did I ever pretend to be, a statesman ; and that character is so tainted and so equivocal in our day, that I am not sure that a pure and honorable ambition would aspire to it. I have not enjoyed for thirty years, like these noble lords, the honors and emoluments of office. I have not set my sails to every passing breeze. I am a plain and simple citizen, sent here by one of the foremost constituencies of the empire ; representing—feebly, perhaps, but honestly, I dare aver—the opinions of very many, and the true interests of all those who have sent me here.”

Nevertheless, in spite of this disclaimer, the laurels of statesmanship are surely his. A keen critic thus responds : “ Mr. Bright has said, in more than one of his speeches, that the title of statesman has been so much abused that he has never very eagerly coveted it. Yet in a certain real, though limited sense, Mr. Bright is a statesman. He is the statesman of a class struggling toward direct participation in affairs, and of a policy, militant through the greater part of his career, but toward its close, and mainly through and by that career, substantially triumphant. In the intellectual and moral qualities of political foresight

and fertile resource which the word statesman expresses, it belongs to him, perhaps, more accurately than to most of his contemporaries. Of course, if statesmanship means or requires the tenure of office ; if a statesman is essentially a man whose name is on the back of bills destined to become law ; if the word applies only to the skillful executive instrument of legislation ; in other words, if a Parliamentary adapter is a statesman, Mr. Bright has slender title to the name. He held office but for a few months, just long enough to crown by his presence in the Cabinet some of his own most important works, and to symbolize the national recognition of the real character of his labors. In this fact lies the justification of the claim made in his behalf to the title of statesman. The statesman is a mid-term, so to speak, between the speculative thinker in politics and the mere executive or legislative instrument, the accident of a party or a Ministry, of a combination or an intrigue, who simply registers and effects the decision of the nation. The speculative thinker, looking far backward into causes and far forward into effects, is usually lost to his contemporaries in the past which he explores or in the future which he foreshadows. The Minister of the day, or at least of our day, deals only with the exigencies and possibilities of the moment. The statesman takes into his view the problems of the generation in which he lives, the actual conditions of society and the reforms which are most urgent, the questions which are unsettled and the methods and details of settlement. If the word statesman is to mean anything else and anything more than office-holder and Parliamentary middle-man, it must mean as much as this ; and in this sense the title belongs to Mr.

Bright quite as much as to some people who seem disposed to monopolize it." \*

"But, taking Mr. Bright as he is, it is indisputable that he has discerned with keenness the questions of the time, and not simply discerned the questions, but prompted the answers. Not only in the Corn Laws, and in the restriction of the suffrage, and the coercion or corruption of the voter, but also in the condition of Ireland and in that of India, and in much of our inherited system of foreign and colonial policy—the policy of interference and of guarantees—he has placed his hands upon the wounds of the Empire, and suggested the curative treatment. His therapeutics have been as sound as his diagnosis. The Irish measures of the present Government were, in some of their main provisions, sketched out and recommended by Mr. Bright, when to hint at such projects was to challenge vituperation as an incendiary, a despoiler, and a communist. The Church-rate question was adjusted on the basis of a compromise suggested by him. His speeches on India contain the outlines of a scheme for reconstructing the Government of that great dependency. The late Treaty of Commerce with France is said to have its origin in a suggestion of his. More than half-a-dozen years ago he proposed arbitration on the Alabama differences, when no Minister would listen to the project. It needs not be said how complete the confirmation of his judgment has been on the issue of the Southern Rebellion, on which so many official persons went wildly wrong. The impolicy of the Russian War, denunciation of which cost him his seat,

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 67-69.

has been practically acknowledged by a Government some of whose members were parties to the conflict. On domestic questions, instead of mere abstract principles equally applicable to all times, or equally inapplicable to any, Mr. Bright has always pointed to definite action, called for by the actual conditions of affairs, and to be reached by specific and assigned means. In the Reform agitation, he sketched out a plan for the redistribution of seats, which, if we may judge from some indications, has a good chance of being accepted as a safe middle-path between the present arrangement and the sweeping and systematic change insisted on by some younger Reformers. He labored for the extension of the franchise less as an end itself than as an instrument of the other reforms which have followed or promise to follow it. If he had contended for it as a 'right of man' he would not have limited his demand to household suffrage, nor qualified that by safeguards against the *residuum*.

"If this estimate of Mr. Bright as a politician be correct, it is difficult to say which of two opposite views is the more absurd—that which represents him as a commonplace Radical of the Joseph Hume type, with an extraordinary gift of eloquence, or that which dresses him up as a great revolutionary character, thrown away upon settled and orderly times. Mr. Bright is essentially a sagacious English politician, with views larger and wider than those of hand-to-mouth Ministers, but narrower than those of speculative thinkers; fertile in resources and expedients, and not indisposed to compromise in unessential points in order to secure a freer assent to what is essential. No Tory, sitting behind Mr. Gathorne Hardy, or side by side

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... all that love freedom there,  
... as they are by the ocean, come  
... stock, may be in future time  
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that the most striking evidence of statesmanlike perception given by Mr. Bright was his comprehension, from the beginning, of the causes and probable consequences of our own Civil War. Other Englishmen were then the friends of America, but Mr. Bright's speeches were like those of an American. In reading Mill, for instance, we often come upon phrases which an American would not have used ; allusions and assertions which seem to need qualification. Among all Mr. Bright's speeches we hardly find a single instance of this ; he knows us as we know ourselves, indeed better than we knew ourselves. Take, for instance, that admirable statement of the whole question with which he opened his address before the Trades Unions of London, March 26, 1863—the meeting which adopted resolutions and an address to President Lincoln.

“ The subject which we have met to discuss is one of surpassing interest,—which excites at this moment, and has excited for two years past, the attention and the astonishment of the civilized world. We see a country which for many years—during the lifetime of the oldest amongst us—has been the most peaceful, and prosperous, and most free, amongst the great nations of the earth—(Hear ! Hear !)—we see it plunged at once into the midst of a sanguinary revolution, whose proportions are so gigantic as to dwarf all other revolutionary records and events of which we have any knowledge. But I do not wonder at this revolution. No man can read the history of the United States, from the time when they ceased to be dependent Colonies of England, without discovering that at the birth of that great Republic there was sown the seed of its dissolution, or at least of its extreme peril ; and the infant giant in its cradle may be said to have been rocked under the shadow of the cypress, which is the symbol of mortality and the tomb. (Cheers.)

“ Colonial weakness, when face to face with British strength, made it impossible to put an end to slavery, or to establish a republic free

from slavery. To meet England, it was necessary to be united, and to be united it was necessary to tolerate slavery; and from that hour to this—at least to a period within the last two or three years—the love of the Union and the patriotism of the American people have induced them constantly to make concessions to slavery, because they knew that when they ceased to make these concessions they ran the peril of that disruption which has now arrived; and they dreaded the destruction of their country even more than they hated the evil of slavery. (Hear!) But these concessions failed, as I believe concessions to evil always do fail. These concessions failed to secure safety in that Union. There were principles at war which were wholly irreconcilable. The South, as you know, for fifty years has been engaged in building fresh ramparts by which it may defend its institutions. The North has been growing yearly greater in freedom; and though the conflict might be postponed, it was obviously inevitable.

“In our day, then, that which the statesmen of America had hoped permanently to postpone has arrived. The great trial is now going on in the sight of the world, and the verdict upon this great question must at last be rendered. But how much is at stake? Some men in this country, some writers, treat it as if, after all, it was no great matter that had caused this contest in the United States. I say that a whole continent is at stake. (Cheers.) It is not a question of boundary; it is not a question of tariff; it is not a question of supremacy of party, or even of the condition of four millions of negroes. (Cheers.) It is more than that. It is a question of a whole continent, with its teeming millions, and what shall be their present and their future fate. (Cheers.) It is for these millions freedom or slavery, education or ignorance, light or darkness, Christian morality, ever-widening and all-blessing in its influence, or an overshadowing and all-blasting guilt. (Cheers.)” \*

Again, at a meeting held at the London Tavern, June 16, 1863, to receive Mr. M. D. Conway, Mr. Bright gave

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\* “Speeches of John Bright on the American Question.” Boston, 1865, p. 172.

the following strong statement of the influence exerted on England by America :

“ We all of us know that there has been a great effect produced in England by the career of the United States. An emigration of three millions or four millions of persons from the United Kingdom, during the last forty years, has bound us to them by hundreds and thousands of family ties,—(Hear! Hear!)—and therefore it follows that whatever there is that is good, and whatever there is that is free, that we have not, we know something about it, and gradually may begin to wish for, and some day may insist upon having. (Loud cheers.)

“ And when I speak of ‘us,’ I mean the people of this country. When I am asserting this fact that the people of England have a great interest in the well-being of the American Republic, I mean the people of England. I do not speak of the wearers of crowns or of coronets in matters of this kind,—(Hear! Hear!)—but of the twenty millions of people in this country who live on their labor, and who, having no votes, are not counted in our political census, but without whom there could be no British nation at all. (Loud cheers.) I say that these have an interest, almost as great and direct as though they were living in Massachusetts or New York, in the tremendous struggle for freedom which is now shaking the whole Northern population. (Cheers.)

“ During the last two years there has been much said, and much written, and some things done in this country, which are calculated to gain us the hate of both sections of the American Union. I believe that a course of policy might have been taken by the English press, and by the English Government, and by what are called the influential classes in England, that would have bound them to our hearts and to their hearts. I speak of the twenty millions of the Free North. I believe we might have been so thoroughly united with the people, that all remembrance of the war of the Revolution and of the war of 1812 would have been obliterated, and we should have been in heart and spirit for all time forth but one nation.

“ I can only hope that, as time passes, and our people become

better informed,—(Hear! Hear!)—they will be more just, and that ill-feeling of every kind will pass away; that in future all that love freedom here will hold converse with all that love freedom there, and that the two nations, separated as they are by the ocean, come as they are, notwithstanding, of one stock, may be in future time united in soul, and may make together every possible effort for the advancement of the liberties and the happiness of mankind. (Prolonged and enthusiastic applause.)” \*

Again, in his great speech on this subject in the House of Commons (June 30, 1863), how admirably he took up, point by point, the questions of interest, of honor, of humanity, even of family ties, which identified, as he argued, the Union cause with the prosperity of England. It is thus, for instance, that he appeals to the cotton interest :

“ And first, with regard to the supply of cotton, in which the noble lord, the member for Stamford, takes such a prodigious interest. I must explain to the noble lord that I know a little about cotton. I happen to have been engaged in that business—not all my life, for the noble lord has seen me here for twenty years—but my interests have been in it; and at this moment the firm of which I am a member have no less than six mills, which have been at a stand for nearly a year, owing to the impossibility of working under the present conditions of the supply of cotton. I live among a people who live by this trade: and there is no man in England who has a more direct interest in it than I have. Before the war, the supply of cotton was little and costly, and every year it was becoming more costly, for the supply did not keep pace with the demand.

“ The point that I am going to argue is this: I believe that the war that is now raging in America is more likely to abolish slavery than not, and more likely to abolish it than any other thing that can be proposed in the world. I regret very much that the pride and

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\* “ Speeches on the American Question,” p. 217.

passion of men are such as to justify me in making this statement. The supply of cotton under slavery must always be insecure. The House felt so in past years; for at my recommendation they appointed a committee, and but for a foolish minister they would have appointed a special commission to India at my request,—(laughter)—and I feel the more regret that they did not do so. Is there any gentleman in this House who will not agree with me in this, that it would be far better for our great Lancashire industry that our supply of cotton should be grown by free labor rather than by slave labor? (Hear!)”\*

The conclusion of this speech was as follows :

“ I have not said a word with regard to what may happen to England if we go into war with the United States. It will be a war on the ocean. Every ship that belongs to the two nations will, as far as possible, be swept from the seas; but when the troubles in America are over—be they ended by restoration of the Union, or by separation—that great and free people, the most instructed in the world,—(loud cries of ‘No!’)—there is not an American to be found in the New England States who cannot read and write, and there are not three men in one hundred in the whole Northern States who cannot read and write,—(cheers)—and those who cannot read and write are those who have recently come from Europe,—(laughter)—I say the most instructed people in the world, and the most wealthy—if you take the distribution of wealth among the whole people—you will leave in their hearts a wound which probably a century may not heal, and the posterity of some of those who now hear my voice may look back with amazement, and I will say with lamentation, at the course which was taken by the honorable and learned gentleman, and by such honorable members as may choose to follow his leading. (No! No!) I suppose the honorable gentlemen who cry ‘No!’ will admit that we sometimes suffer from some errors of our ancestors. (Hear! Hear!) There are few persons who will not admit that, if their fathers had been wiser, their children would have been happier. (Hear! Hear!)

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\* “Speeches on the American Question,” pp. 234, 235.

In a speech at Rochdale, during the excitement caused by the Mason and Slidell seizure, he showed this more than sympathy, this community of spirit with the United States, in express words. "The crisis to which we have arrived," he said, "—I say 'we,' for after all we are nearly as much interested as if I was making this speech in the city of Boston or the city of New York—this crisis, I say, which has now arrived, was inevitable." Elsewhere he has generously said, speaking of America :

“We see there a nation whom I shall call the Transatlantic English nation,—(Hear! Hear!)—the inheritor and partaker of all the historic glories of this country. We see it torn with intestine broils, and suffering from calamities from which for more than a century past—in fact, for more than two centuries past—this country has

\* "Speeches on the American Question," p. 253.

been exempt. That struggle is of especial interest to us. We remember the description which one of our great poets gives of Rome—

‘Lone mother of dead empires.’

But England is the living mother of great nations on the American and on the Australian continents, which promise to endow the world with all our knowledge and all our civilization, and even something more than the freedom she herself enjoys. (Cheers.)” \*

It shows how slowly Mr. Bright's real character made itself recognized, that he was mentioned by an otherwise just and dispassionate American observer, long after the beginning of our war, as a mere demagogue. Hon. F. Wayland, Jr., in an excellent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for December, 1861, thus refers to Mr. Bright: “The unwearied exertions of Bright, Roebuck, and other leading Radicals, could not arouse the people to that state of unreasoning excitement in which these demagogues delight.” † And though Mr. Bright was admitted by this writer to be “the best declaimer in the House,” it was remarked that “he labors under the prevalent suspicion of being insincere, and, beyond a small circle of devoted admirers, has no influence whatever in Parliament.” Probably the subsequent career of this great man has forever removed this impression.

It has, however, also removed the impression of his extreme radicalism. For instance, he has never yet avowed himself unequivocally as being in favor of republican institutions in England; though no one has ever expressed

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\* “Speeches on the American Question,” p. 11.

† “*Atlantic Monthly*, VIII., 669.

with more eloquence the principle of self-respect and self-government, on which republican government rests. Thus he said at Rochdale (Dec. 4, 1861) :

" We know what an election is in the United States for President of the Republic. There is a most extensive suffrage, and there is the ballot-box. The members of the House of Representatives are elected by the same suffrage, and generally they are elected at the same time. It is thus, therefore, almost inevitable that the House of Representatives is in accord in public policy with the President for the time being. Every four years there springs from the vote created by the whole people a President over that great nation. I think the world offers no finer spectacle than this ; it offers no higher dignity ; and there is no greater object of ambition on the political stage on which men are permitted to move. You may point, if you will, to hereditary rulers, to crowns coming down through successive generations of the same family, to thrones based on prescription or on conquest, to scepters wielded over veteran legions and subject realms—but to my mind there is nothing so worthy of reverence and obedience, and nothing more sacred, than the authority of the freely chosen by the majority of a great and free people (applause) ; and if there be on earth and among men any right divine to govern, surely it rests with a ruler so chosen and so approved. (Renewed applause.)" \*

It was predicted long since of Mr. Bright, as it is often foretold of radicals, that actual power would produce conservatism. Lord Lytton wrote long since,

" Let Bright responsible for England be,  
And straight in Bright a Chatham we shall see."

And the subject of these lines himself said in 1846, when defending Sir Robert Peel : " You placed him in office. When a man is in office, he is not the same man as when he is in opposition \* \* \* There are such things as the

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\* " Speeches on the American Question," pp. 19, 20.

responsibilities of office." It cannot be said of Mr. Bright that he has ever recanted a profession or sacrificed a principle, but it is undoubtedly true that he has disappointed those who regarded him as a radical by temperament, and not merely by conviction. "The extent of Mr. Bright's democratic tendencies," says Mr. Justin McCarthy, "would probably disappoint some Americans. I may say now what I should, probably, have been laughed at for saying some years ago, that there is a good deal of the conservative about John Bright; that he is by nature disposed to shrink from innovation; and that he is about the last man in England who would care to make political war for an idea." \*

Yet, even as these pages go to press, there has come the report of a speech by Mr. Bright to his constituents, with an appeal for another daring reform, the disestablishment of the Church of England. But that very able observer, Mr. Smalley, who describes it for the *New York Tribune*, is compelled to admit that from ill-health, or from some other cause, the speaker did not show his usual power. The letter opens thus :

"LONDON, Jan. 26.—Mr. Bright's speech last night at Birmingham would be thought a great speech for anybody but him, or in any circumstances but the present. I can judge of it only by report, for I could not go down to hear Mr. Bright, as I had meant to. But it is pretty clear, from what is said in this morning's papers, that the speech has disappointed people. The greatest oratorical effort would not have satisfied expectations. What was wanted from

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\* "Modern Leaders," p. 111.

Mr. Bright was some practical solution of the difficulties which encompass the Liberal party, some counsel for its guidance, a new programme, a consoling explanation of its defeat last February, a remedy for its internal dissensions, and many other things beside. I remember no period in English politics, since the organization of the Liberal party, when there was so much discouragement and such a stress of helplessness. Men don't know what to be at. They looked to Mr. Bright to tell them, and he has not told them. Of course there are programmes enough, in one sense ; there are even too many. The trouble is that there is no one which unites the different sections of the party. There is more difference between them than between one of these and the Tory party. They are not even animated by the hope of regaining office ; or perhaps even by the desire of it. They would not know what to do with the power if some miracle should restore them to place. Abandoned by Mr. Gladstone, the more thoughtful of the advanced Liberals turn naturally to Mr. Bright—to him who, for a quarter of a century, had supplied the party with ideas. But Mr. Bright has no distinct plan or purpose. He has not spoken in public since the general election, but he refers to it only in an incidental way. He deplores the retirement of Mr. Gladstone, but has no opinion to offer on the choice of his successor ; still less on the choice of a policy which that successor should follow. His speech is nearly all devoted to a discussion of ecclesiastical matters, yet it is very far indeed from being a speech with which to open a campaign for disestablishment.

“The truth is, I suppose, that Mr. Bright did not feel equal to the situation. He did not think it was for him

to attempt a task from which Mr. Gladstone had withdrawn in discouragement. Yet the fifteen thousand people—or twenty thousand, as others compute—who filled the great hall in which he spoke must have gone away feeling that they had listened to a great intellectual effort; to a speech which, as an effort of pure oratory, was not unworthy of Mr. Bright's days of unbroken health. In truth, it was an effort in the most painful sense of the word. Mr. Bright spoke in circumstances of great physical discomfort. He has been suffering from nervousness, and from a return of his old throat troubles. It was doubtful yesterday whether he could speak at all. His will, and his dislike to send his constituents away empty, triumphed over his maladies.”\*

The following extracts, if they give no just impression of the speech itself, give us at least the last public words, up to the present moment, from Mr. Bright :

“Then we are brought face to face with this great fact, which is—and I wish you to consider this—that the State Church, as we have it now, is not and cannot be in harmony with the age. (Cheers.) I should like to ask you what there is that was established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth that is in harmony with the reign of Queen Victoria? (Applause.) Why, the difference between the two Queens is enormous, and cannot be exaggerated. The arbitrary doings, the absolute power, and the insulting assertion of it in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, cannot be in harmony with the moderation, the justice, the kindness, and the sympathy which you have in the Queen of our own day. (Cheers.)

“I will not complain, though I might complain—and it is a strong argument in the case—that wherever you find the Church of England powerful there you find the opposition to any legislative or administrative reform most powerful also. (Hear, hear.) We have received no service from the Church of England as a body. There have been

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\* New York *Tribune*, Feb. 11, 1875.

occasional, and remarkable, and admirable exceptions, but as a body we have received no service on all the great measures of change and improvement which have so blessed this country during the last half century. (Hear, hear.) \* \* \* \*

"I do not recommend this meeting or any constituency that they should pledge their candidates to vote for the abolition of the Established Church. I do not in the least degree recommend or approve of any body of men who complain that a party or party leader is chosen who has not formed the same opinion that I have upon this question. This is a question which has not come near that point yet. It is one of the gravest questions which a people has ever had to consider. It is far more important, and far more difficult than the question of the extension of the suffrage or of the redistribution of seats. (Hear, hear.) It is a question that goes down deep into the hearts of hundreds of thousands of good men and women in this country, and you cannot by a wrench make a great disturbance of this kind. What you have to do is to discuss it like intelligent and Christian men, with fairness to its ministers, with the sole object of doing what you believe to be good to your country and to the religion which the country professes. (Applause.) \* \* \* \*

"Now, Sir, in conclusion, I say I am not asking you or your constituencies, or any party or section of a party, to plunge into a violent agitation for the overthrow of the Established Church of England. I think it would be a great calamity, indeed, that a great change like that should come of violent hatred and discussion, and that it should be accomplished in a tempest which is almost like the turmoil of a great revolution. I ask you only to consider it, and I appeal not only to you who may be Nonconformists, but I appeal to those who do care about it, who do care, as they say they do, about Protestantism and religion. It is not for me to join in any crusade against the Church. I have offered to you to-night my humble contribution to the discussion of the greatest question of our time. ('Oh!') If I am able to form any just judgment upon it, I should say that will be a great day for freedom in this country, and for Protestantism and Christianity, which shall witness the full enfranchisement of the Church within the realm of England. (Loud cheers.)"



#### IV.

### EARL RUSSELL.

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**T**HE name of Earl Russell—or the far more familiar name of Lord John Russell—is to most Americans indelibly associated with the pages of *Punch*. For myself, at least, I had always seen him in imagination as an alert little page in buttons, called before Queen Victoria as a candidate for office, and standing in visible eagerness to run, fetch, and carry for his future mistress ; while she sits and looks doubtfully at him with the anxious remark, “I’m afraid you’re not strong enough for the place, John !” With this vivid picture in my mind, it was hard to substitute for that image the little old man who entered the House of Lords amid a hush of silence, during the exciting debate on the Alabama claims, and who was announced to me in a whisper as Earl Russell.

Next to the pictures in *Punch*, a single sentence of Sydney Smith’s has probably done most to characterize this statesman for American readers. It occurs in his second letter addressed to Archdeacon Singleton :

"There is not a better man in England than Lord John Russell ; but his worst failure is, that he is utterly ignorant of all moral fear ; there is nothing he would not undertake. I believe he would perform the operation for the stone, build St. Peter's, or assume (with or without ten minutes' notice) the command of the Channel fleet ; and no one would discover by his manner that the patient had died, the church tumbled down, and the Channel fleet been knocked to atoms. I believe his motives are always pure, and his measures often able ; but they are endless, and never done with that pedetentous\* pace and that pedetentous mind in which it behooves the wise and virtuous improver to walk. He alarms the wise Liberals ; and it is impossible to sleep soundly while he has the command of the watch."

In his late volume of "Recollections and Suggestions," Lord Russell takes pains to plead "not guilty" to this indictment. And as, in general, autobiography is the most interesting form of biography—and as this book is far more attractive for its particular passages than as a whole—I shall extract liberally from its pages, in illustration of certain special aspects of Earl Russell's career.

#### EARL RUSSELL AS DESCRIBED BY HIMSELF.

Lord Russell thus describes his early education. He was born, it must be remembered, August 19, 1792 :

"It may interest some persons to learn what education I had received before I entered Parliament. That educa-

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\* This word is adapted by Sydney Smith from Cicero's word *pedetentim*, meaning step-by-step, cautiously or gradually.

tion was in part broken and disturbed. After being at a private school at Sunbury, I went to Westminster, but was so ill there that, by the care and affection of my step-mother, the Duchess of Bedford, my father was persuaded to remove me, and I was sent with several young men of riper age to receive private tuition from the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Woodnesbury, in Kent. There I formed relations of friendship with the Earl of Clare, the late Duke of Leinster, his brother, Lord William Fitzgerald, and others. But I had not remained there long, when Lord and Lady Holland proposed that I should accompany them on a journey to Spain, in the troubled year 1808. When I returned from Spain, in 1810, I asked my father to allow me to go to the University of Cambridge. But he told me that, in his opinion, there was nothing to be learnt at English Universities, and procured for me admission to the house of Professor Playfair, at Edinburgh.

“There I had my studies directed and my character developed by one of the best and the noblest, the most upright, the most benevolent, and the most liberal of all philosophers.

“Some years afterwards I traveled again in Spain with my cousin, the late Earl of Bradford, and Robert Clive, the son of Lord Powis. In the course of these travels I became acquainted with the Duke of Wellington, and had occasion to admire the calmness, the directness, and the patriotism which distinguished his character.

“But I need not follow this narrative any further. I was about to accompany my companions to Constantinople, and return home by way of Moscow and St. Petersburg, when I was informed by a letter from my father

that his old friend, the acute and witty Fitzpatrick, was dead, and that he intended to propose me as candidate for Tavistock. Thus I became a member of Parliament before I was of age, and from that time my political life begins."

Of these travels in Spain, and of his early initiation into the great contests of Europe, he has left this vivid picture :

"In the autumn of 1808, when only sixteen years of age, I accompanied Lord and Lady Holland to Corunna, and afterwards to Lisbon, Seville, and Cadiz, returning by Lisbon to England in the summer of 1809. They were eager for the success of the Spanish cause, and I joined to sympathy for Spain a boyish hatred of Napoleon, who had treacherously obtained possession of an independent country by force and fraud—force of immense armies—fraud of the lowest kind.

"In 1810, I went on a visit to my brother, Lord William Russell, at the Isla de Leon. He then served on the staff of Sir Thomas Graham, who was gallantly defending Cadiz against two French divisions.

"When my visit was over, Colonel James Stanhope, who likewise was on the staff of Sir Thomas Graham, proposed to me to go with him and Colonel Walpole to the head-quarters of Lord Wellington, who had just occupied with his army the lines of Torres Vedras.

"This offer I joyfully accepted, and, after a voyage to Faro, and a pleasant journey by Almodovar, we arrived at the quarters of General Hill.

"The next morning we rode with General Hill through

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\* "Recollections and Suggestions," 1817-1873, by John Earl Russell. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1875. P. 4.

he small town of Alhandra, beyond which *abattis* were placed to stop the French cavalry, as this was the farthest English post. Indeed, it had been intended to leave Alhandra to the French ; and I remember that Lord Grey, whom I met at dinner at Holland House on my return to England, was much surprised when I told him that I had ridden through the place within a fortnight.

“My friends and I proceeded next day to Pero Nero, where we were most kindly received by Lord Wellington. We were furnished with bedsteads though not with beds, and the next morning before daylight we accompanied our general to the fort of Sobral.

“Never was I more struck than with the physical, military, and political spectacle which lay before me. Standing on the highest point, and looking around him on every side, was the English General, his eyes bright and searching as those of an eagle, his countenance full of hope, beaming with intelligence, as he marked with quick perception every movement of troops and every change of circumstance within the sweep of the horizon. On each side of the fort of Sobral rose the intrenchments of the Allies, bristling with guns and alive with the troops who formed the garrison of this fortified position. Far off, on the left, the cliffs rose to a moderate elevation, and the line of Torres Vedras was prominent in the distance.

“Below us, over a large extent of hill and valley, plain and eminence, was the position of the French army. The villages were full of their soldiers ; the white sails of the Portuguese windmills were actively in motion for the supply of flour to the invading army. There stood the advanced guard of the conquering legions of France : here

was the living barrier of England, Spain, and Portugal, prepared to stay the destructive flood, and to preserve from the deluge, the liberty and independence of three armed nations. The sight filled me with admiration, with confidence, and with hope.

“Impressed with these sentiments I returned to England. Being some time, in the succeeding autumn, at Lord Grey’s at Howick, I betted a guinea with his brother-in-law, Lord Ponsonby, that at that time next year Lord Wellington would still hold the lines of Torres Vedras. Lord Grey thought that I had made a foolish bet, and referred to the lines of Marshal Villars, called the *ne plus ultra* of Marlborough, and which Marlborough successfully penetrated, as a proof that the lines could not be held. At the end of a year Lord Ponsonby paid me my bet.

“I remember that in the year 1812, being at dinner at Lord Wellington’s head-quarters, he called to Lord March (afterward Duke of Richmond), ‘What are you talking of at that end of the table?’ Lord March: ‘We are discussing, sir, the question whether, if we went back to the lines at Torres Vedras, we should again be able to hold them.’ Lord Wellington said: ‘That may be a political question, but as a military question, I would go back twenty times to the lines, and be confident of holding them.’ I saw Lord Wellington on three other occasions during the Peninsular War.

“The second was, when in company with my cousin George Bridgeman, and my friend Robert Clive, I entered Spain from Oporto. We joined the army at the time when Lord Wellington, after the victory of Salamanca and the capture of Madrid, had failed in his siege of the castle of

Burgos. I sat next to him at dinner, in the evening, when he had made up his mind to retire, and to withdraw his army both from the siege of Burgos and the occupation of Madrid. I knew nothing of this important and mortifying decision, nor could anything less prepare me for it than the conversation of the great commander. He said he was sorry he could not show me the castle; talked of the advance of the French army, of which I had been a witness, as a *forte reconnaissance*, and laughed at the luxury of a Highland soldier, who had piled up a whole tree and set it in a blaze, in order to make himself a comfortable fire-side. The rest of his conversation was taken up by comic descriptions of the defects of his three iron guns—Thunder, Lightning, and Nelson—of which one had a severe wound in the mouth, and another had lost its trunnions by the fire of the enemy. After dinner, my companions and I were informed by Colonel Ponsonby that a retreat was resolved upon for that night, and we were advised to pack ourselves off as quickly as we could. We lost no time in following that advice, and, for my part, I found a very comfortable bed on a heap of chopped straw some leagues from Burgos. We tried to reach Madrid by San Ildefonso, but were again driven back by the French advance, and forced to proceed by Salamanca and the Sierra de Gata to Badajoz, Seville, and Cadiz.\*

The condition of England when Lord Russell entered Parliament, is thus described :

“The foreign policy of our Government was at this time

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\* “Recollections and Suggestions, 1813-1873, by John Earl Russell.” Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1875. Page 4 ✓

a timid repudiation of all those doctrines of national liberty and independence which had been inscribed on our flag at the end of the war, and which had led Madame de Staël to declare that the Tories of England were the Whigs of Europe.

"Our financial system was based on the necessity of keeping up a Navy and Army suited to our high position, and of paying the interest of a debt which, having amounted to one hundred and thirty millions before the American War, had risen to eight hundred and thirty-six millions at the death of George III. In order to defray these expenses, the taxation of the country had penetrated to every corner and cranny of an Englishman's life, in the manner described with so much humor, and no less truth, by Sydney Smith.

"With the same object of collecting a large revenue, and also of promoting native industry, prohibition and protection pervaded our commercial code.

"No Roman Catholic could hold high civil office, or be admitted to a seat in Parliament. No Protestant dissenter could hold any official position without nominally, at least, submitting to what, in his eyes, were degradation and profanation.

"Last of all, our Parliamentary representation was a mockery and a scandal." \*

Entering Parliament in 1813, he took part in debates on various points connected with the social condition of England; and in 1819 he first took a position of leadership, as an advocate of Parliamentary Reform. This being,

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\* "Recollections," etc., p. 14.

probably, the most important course of action undertaken by any modern English statesman, it will be quite worth while to give in some detail his narrative of the whole movement :

“The state of the representation of the people in the House of Commons, which in 1780 had excited so much popular discontent, had in the course of a long lapse of time become more and more unsatisfactory. Successive sovereigns had granted the right, or imposed the burden, of returning members to Parliament on the corporations, freeholders, or burgage-tenants of numerous small towns. Powerful peers and wealthy commoners had bought property in these small boroughs with a view to increase their political influence. One noble lord used to go out hunting followed by a tail of six or seven members of Parliament of his own making. Another, being asked who should be returned for one of his boroughs, named a waiter at White’s Club ; but as he did not know the man’s Christian name, the election was declared void, and a fresh election was held, when, the name having been ascertained, the waiter was duly elected. The object of the boroughmongers, as they were called, was generally to buy up the freeholds or burgage tenures in a small borough, in order to reduce the number of electors to a manageable number. If a freeholder or burgage-tenant refused to sell, it was not a very uncommon practice to blow up his house with gunpowder, and thus disfranchise a political opponent.

“In this manner a number of boroughs, called nomination boroughs, were created, and became valuable property. A seat for the whole duration of a Parliament was sold for £5,000. But as Parliaments were subject to sudden death,

prudent men made a bargain to pay £1,000 a year so long as they sat in the House of Commons. Mr. Ricardo, and many others, were members of the House of Commons in virtue of such payment. Sir Francis Burdett entered Parliament by purchase of a seat from the trustees of the Duke of Newcastle—a minor. Other proprietors of boroughs sold their seats to the Treasury for rank, office, or patronage. A friend of mine was concerned for a friend of his in a transaction of this kind. A valuable sinecure was part of the assets to be allotted to the seller of a portion of the representation of the people—I think not less than four seats. The partial remedies applied from time to time by Parliament did little to cure a wide-spread and notorious evil.”\*

“On the other hand, while a few men governed the Government, large commercial and manufacturing cities had grown up which had no representatives in Parliament. Mr. Stuart Wortley conducted all the local business of Yorkshire—of Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, and Sheffield; Lord Stanley that of Lancashire—that is, of Manchester, Oldham, and other populous towns. On public affairs these great centers of industry, skill, intelligence, and wealth had no representative voice whatever.

“With a view to work my way to a change, not by eloquence—for I had none—but by patient toil, and a plain statement of facts, I brought before the House of Commons the case of Grampound. I obtained an inquiry; and, with the assistance of Mr. Charles Wynn, I forced the solicitors employed in bribery to reveal the se-

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\* “Recollections,” etc., p. 28.

crets of their employers : the case was clear ; the borough was convicted.

“At this time Lord Castlereagh, who had always been personally very kind to me, invited me to speak to him on one of the benches behind the Treasury Bench. He told me that the Government would cordially support me, if I would content myself with extending the right of voting for Grampound to the neighboring hundreds. I answered him that I could not agree to that proposal, and that I must persist in proposing that the franchises of Grampound should be transferred to the town of Leeds. This was, in fact, the whole principle at issue between the Government and the reformers. The hundreds of Cornwall represented the stationary policy of the Ministry ; Leeds, the new population which I sought to admit, and with them, the principle of reform. When, twelve years afterward, I proposed a bill of reform, on behalf of Lord Grey and his colleagues, Mr. Alexander Baring said, ‘The plan takes away representation from the barley-field and gives it to the coal-field.’ This was the truth in 1819, as in 1832. My proposal took away representation from the dead bones of a former state of England, and gave it to the living energy and industry of the England of the nineteenth century, with its steam-engines and its factories, its cotton and woolen cloths, its cutlery and its coal-mines, its wealth and its intelligence. The present vindicated its rights ; the past lost its privilege.

“But to return.

“After a long conversation, Lord Castlereagh persisted in his view and I in mine. I carried my bill in the House of Commons ; but when it went to the House of Lords,

the town of Leeds was expunged, and the two disposable seats were given to the county of York. Thus the introduction of new representation was avoided. It is singular, however, that the Government of 1820 should have thought that by excluding Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham from representation, they were consulting the Conservative interests of the Constitution! Such, however, was the spirit of the Government of Liverpool and Castlereagh.

"After the disfranchisement of Grampound, I revolved in my mind a plan for the reform of the whole state of the representation.

"In meditating upon this subject, I had to survey not only the danger of shaking an edifice which resembled rather a strong fortress than an ordinary dwelling-house, but also party objections which would be brought against me." \*

In 1822, Lord John Russell, having been expressly urged to it by Sir James Mackintosh, brought forward a more extended measure of reform. In a speech of three hours, he proposed that "one hundred members should be added to the House of Commons and that they should be chosen by the larger counties and the great commercial and manufacturing communities of the kingdom." This was strongly opposed by Mr. Canning, in a speech from which the following is an extract:

"That the noble lord will carry his motion this evening, I have no fear; but with the talents which he has shown himself to possess, and with (I sincerely hope) a long and brilliant career of parliamentary distinction before him, he will, no doubt, renew his efforts

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\* "Recollections," etc., p. 32.

hereafter. Although I presume not to give any weight to observations or warnings of mine, yet on this, probably the last opportunity I shall have of raising my voice on the question of Parliamentary reform, while I conjure the House to pause before it consents to adopt the proposition of the noble lord, I cannot help conjuring the noble lord himself to pause before he again presses it upon the country. If, however, he shall persevere—and if his perseverance shall be successful—and if the result of that success shall be such as I cannot help apprehending—his be the triumph to have precipitated those results—be mine the consolation that to the utmost, and the latest of my power, I have opposed them. (Loud cheers.)”

No immediate result followed, Roman Catholic emancipation being then the absorbing question, and being destined to lead the way to other agitation. This was foreseen, Lord Russell tells us, by shrewd statesmen :

“One of the shrewdest of the Tory party, who afterward held a Cabinet office, is reported to have observed that he should not have felt so much objection to Catholic emancipation had he not felt sure that it would be followed by reform of Parliament.

“He was not mistaken. The Catholic question having been moved out of the way, attention was more eagerly directed to the faults of the existing state of the representation of the people.

“Standing one day at the bar of the House of Commons, in the year 1830, I showed Mr. Huskisson some resolutions on parliamentary reform which I intended to move. Huskisson said : ‘I cannot vote for these resolutions, but something to this effect will be carried before long.’ \* \* \*

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\* Quoted in “Recollections,” etc. p. 38.

“Few men saw justly and clearly the consequences at home of the course pursued by the Duke of Wellington abroad. The Revolution in France, overthrowing Legitimacy, and crowning a monarchy founded upon popular resistance; the excitement of a general election, and the accession of a new sovereign; the internal state of the country, resulting from long mismanagement; all contributed to bring about, on the one side a desire of change, and on the other discouragement and despondency.

“When, therefore, at the meeting of Parliament, November the 3d, the Duke of Wellington declared that the constitution of the House of Commons was perfect, and that the wit of man could not *à priori* have devised anything so good, the general feeling was one of dismay. The House of Lords, usually so calm, showed signs of amazement and perturbation. The Duke whispered to one of his colleagues, ‘What can I have said which seems to make so great a disturbance?’ ‘You have announced the fall of your Government, that is all,’ replied his more clear-sighted colleague.

“Accordingly, when Sir Henry Parnell, in the House of Commons, moved an amendment respecting the appointment of a Committee on the Civil List, which Mr. Tierney had frequently brought forward unsuccessfully, it was carried by a majority of upward of thirty. Although, in ordinary times, this victory of the Opposition would have been of little consequence, it was now thought so serious, that Mr. Peel went at once to the Duke of Wellington, at Apsley House, to declare he could no longer remain in office; the following day the whole Ministry re-

signed. Lord Grey was sent for by the King, and desired by his Majesty to form an administration."

A scheme of reform was then planned by Lord John Russell and others, and was submitted to Lord Grey. His cabinet contained but very few members who had supported proposals for reform of Parliament. The scheme proposed was, however, adopted in substance as an administration measure, though the ballot, which had formed a part of the concerted plan, but not of Lord John Russell's plan, was struck out. The measure, it seems, was brought forward in Parliament without previous notice to the public. Lord Russell says :

"I was so fully persuaded that the country would respond with enthusiasm and readily assent to a large proposal of reform, that I entreated Lord Grey to impress upon his colleagues the necessity of secrecy, in order that the plan might come with all the freshness of novelty upon the public ear, and deprive our opponents of the advantage of making adequate preparations to resist the first assault upon the well-fortified intrenchments of the enemy. So little were the opposite party prepared for the bill, that a few days before the first of March, Sir Robert Peel, in a careful speech, derided what had been done on the subjects of peace and retrenchment, and predicted that when the plan of reform should be developed, it would occasion disappointment by the meagerness of its proportions, and the trifling nature of the changes recommended.

"The effect, therefore, of the revelations of the first of March was astounding. I had purposely omitted, or passed

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\* "Recollections," etc., pp. 50, 51.

slightly over, those arguments in favor of reform, which in 1822 I had developed at length. Sir Robert Peel observed sarcastically that I had said that many ingenious arguments were urged in favor of the ballot, but that I had not stated any ingenious arguments in favor of my proposition of that night. This was substantially true. It seemed to me that the arguments in favor of reform had made their impression—a very deep impression—upon the country; but that those arguments had become trite and familiar, and that the great novelty of my speech must consist in a clear and intelligible statement of the nature of the proposition I had to make. The extinction of one hundred and fifty seats in the House of Commons, all taken from the class of boroughs which were either dependent or venal, would amount, if carried, to a revolution.

“It was no wonder, therefore, that this proposition, when placed boldly and baldly before the House of Commons, created feelings of astonishment, mingled with joy or with consternation, according to the temper of the hearers. Mr. John Smith, himself a member for a nomination borough, said the proposal took away his breath. Some, perhaps many, thought that the measure was a prelude to civil war, which, in point of fact, it averted. But incredulity was the prevailing feeling, both among the moderate Whigs and the great mass of the Tories. Sir Henry Hardinge told Sir James Graham that he supposed we should all go out the next morning. Many of the Whigs thought it impossible the Government could succeed, either in the existing House of Commons or by an appeal to the people.

“The Radicals alone were delighted and triumphant.

Joseph Hume, when I met him in the streets a day or two afterward, assured me of his hearty support of the Government. He said (on another subject, in a public speech) that he was ready to vote black white in order to carry the measure of reform. Lord Durham, who was sitting under the gallery on the first of March, told me he was inclined to doubt the reality of what was passing before his eyes. A noble lord who sat opposite to me, and who has long ago succeeded to a seat in the House of Lords, cheered me so vociferously that I was myself inclined to doubt his meaning. I found afterward that his cheers were meant derisively, to show his thorough conviction of the absurdity and impracticability of my proposals.\*

"For my own part, my impression had always been that if the Reform Bill of Lord Grey could go down to the country, it would receive such an amount of support as would insure its ultimate, if not its immediate, success. I was, therefore, much pleased when I found that the leaders of the Opposition did not intend to dispute the introduction of the bill, and still more satisfied when, by nine nights of debate, time was given to the country to hold public meetings, and to communicate to their members the popular, and, what turned out to be the almost universal, opinion in favor of the proposed measure.

"The second reading was fixed for an early day, and both parties prepared anxiously for the coming conflict.

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\* Lord Russell's note to this passage is too characteristic to be omitted: "I had thought it due to the Cabinet to conceal in my speech the part which I had taken in preparing the measure. In this concealment I was not justified; I ought to have told the whole truth."

"Before the day arrived, many members who had never voted for reform on previous occasions, and who were really hostile to any change in the representation, received such accounts of the ferment existing in the country, that they made up their minds to vote in favor of the second reading. Among these may be reckoned Sir Thomas Acland and Mr. Wilson Patten, the one member for Devonshire and the other for Lancashire, both excellent country gentlemen. The second reading was carried, after a long debate, by a majority of one. I never saw so much exultation expressed in the House of Commons as upon that occasion. One member threw his hat up in the air, and the vociferous cheering was prolonged for some minutes.

"Yet this majority, trifling as it was, was far from expressing the intention of those who composed it to give a cordial and thorough support to the bill in the shape in which it was introduced. Many amendments, destructive of its chief provisions, would have been introduced and carried, had the bill been proceeded with in that House of Commons." \*

It proved, however, unsafe to attempt to carry the bill through with a bare majority. "It was manifest that the existing House of Commons would endeavor to destroy in detail what they had sanctioned in bulk;" and as the reformers were sure that they had the country with them, they resolved to appeal to the people, and induced the King to dissolve Parliament. Lord Russell continues :

"The King, though averse to the adoption of such a

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\* "Recollections," etc., p. 57.

proceeding little more than six months after the general election, was disposed, at this time, to trust implicitly Lord Grey, and I am inclined to believe the popular story that when it suddenly appeared necessary, in order to prevent remonstrance from the House of Lords, that the King should appear in person to dissolve Parliament, and so trifling difficulty of plaiting the horses' manes in time was interposed as an objection, the King said at once, 'Then I'll go down to Parliament in a hackney-coach.' Had it not been the spirit of Louis XVI. he might have been a leader instead of the victim of the French Revolution.

"The scenes which occurred in the two Houses of Parliament, so far as I was a witness of them, were singular and unprecedented. Before the King arrived, the House of Commons was assembled, and Sir Robert Peel and Francis Burdett rose at the same time to address the House. Lord Althorp, amid the confusion and clamor of contending parties, following the precedent of Mr. Fox, moved that Sir Francis Burdett be now heard. Sir Robert Peel, on the other hand, imitating a precedent of Lord North, said: 'and I rise to speak to that motion.' But instead of saying a few words, as Lord North had done, to put an end to all further debate, Sir Robert Peel quite lost his temper and in tones of the most violent indignation attacked the impending dissolution. As he went on, the Tower guns began to fire, to announce the King's arrival, and as each discharge was heard, a loud cheer from the Government side interrupted Sir Robert Peel's declamation. Sir Henry Hardinge was heard to exclaim, 'The next time the guns are fired they will be shotted!' Presently we were all summoned to the House of Lords, where the King

presence had put a stop to a violent and unseemly discussion. The King, in his speech, announced the dissolution and retired to unrobe. The scene that followed was one of great excitement and confusion. As I was standing at the bar, Lord Lyndhurst came up to me and said, 'Have you considered the state of Ireland? do not you expect an insurrection?' or words to that effect. It so happened that in going into the House of Commons, I had met O'Connell in the lobby. I asked him, 'Will Ireland be quiet during the general election?' and he answered me, 'Perfectly quiet.' He did not answer for more than he was able to perform. But of course I said nothing of this to Lord Lyndhurst, and left him to indulge his anger and his gloomy foreboding.

"Many good Liberals were in great despondency about the election, and fancied, as they well might, that an appeal to the condemned boroughs to sanction their own extinction would meet with a very unfavorable reception, while, on the other hand, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield, and the principal manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, would be unable to take part in the election.

"But the forty-shilling freeholders, both in those towns and in the rural counties, made themselves heard in favor of reform. Middlesex, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Devonshire, were unanimous in their choice of reform candidates.

"The members for the English counties, with the addition of two members for Yorkshire in place of Grampound, were altogether eighty-two; of these upward of seventy, I think seventy-six, pledged themselves to support Lord Grey and the Reform Bill. The proportion of the two parties

appeared on the second reading, when there divided in favor of the bill three hundred and sixty-seven, making, with nine pairs and two tellers, three hundred and seventy-eight; against it two hundred and thirty-one, with the same addition of pairs and tellers, two hundred and forty-two, giving a majority of one hundred and thirty-six for the Government and the Reform Bill. This was a majority which no skillful manœuvres, nor even the authority of the time-honored House of Lords, although led by such men as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst, were likely to counteract or overbear.

“The Parliament met on June 14, and, after the election of a Speaker and a debate on the address, the new Reform Bill was immediately introduced. The second reading, as I have said, was carried by a large majority, and the opponents of the bill, no way dismayed, reserved their opposition for committee. For forty nights the subject was discussed, in its principles as well as in its details. Sir Robert Peel, besides objecting to the large amount of disfranchisement and to the ten-pound franchise, took special exception to the partial disfranchisement in Schedule B, and, after a very neat and well-arranged speech of Mr. Praed, Sir Robert argued, with his usual force and ability, that more room should be left for the entrance into Parliament of men of retired and studious habits. Subsequent legislation seems to indicate that, according to public opinion, too many seats, rather than too few, were left to men of retired and studious habits. But, besides these fair and plausible objections to the extent and democratic tendency of the bill, skillful lawyers like Sir Edward Sugden and Sir Charles Wetherell tried to unpick it thread by thread,

leaving no remnant of the original texture. That which Penelope did to keep off her suitors, they attempted to do to keep off reform. But, at the end of forty nights, on the seventh of September, the debate was closed, and after much labor, and considerable sacrifice of health, I was able, on that night, to propose, amid much cheering, that the bill should be reported to the House.

"The bill was then carried to the House of Lords, and on October 2 the second reading was proposed by Lord Grey. There never was a debate of greater importance, or one marked by more ability. Lord Grey's opening speech recording that, in 1786, he had voted with Mr. Pitt in favor of reform of Parliament; his clear and able statement of the reasons which seemed to him to require that the bill should be adopted by Parliament, and that, in order to be safe and enduring, it should be large and commensurate with the evil to be abated, was powerful and convincing."\*

The bill was rejected in the House of Lords, and was abandoned; but a new bill was more carefully framed, thus:

"The number of boroughs to be wholly or partially disfranchised had been, in my original sketch, arbitrarily fixed. Lord Durham had suggested that the penalty of total disfranchisement should be confined to towns, or rather villages, of less than two thousand inhabitants, and that none under four thousand should return more than one member. But the arbitrary line was now again resorted to; the number of boroughs to be wholly or partially disfranchised was copied from the bill rejected by

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\* "Recollections," etc., p. 62.

the House of Lords, and the test I have mentioned was applied to that number, so that fifty-six boroughs, returning one hundred and eleven members, were placed in Schedule A\* for total extinction, and thirty boroughs, returning sixty members, were condemned to lose half their representatives. In this manner one hundred and forty-one seats belonging to boroughs which, since the days of Charles I., had regularly sent members to Parliament, were cut off on account of their dependence or their insignificance. By my original sketch, one hundred and forty-nine seats would have been disfranchised.

"This was the most popular part of the Reform Bill. The country argued that from these boroughs, in scarcely any of which the element of popular representation existed, had arisen all obstructions to the reforms and retrenchments which the people so evidently desired. As this was the strong and popular position of the Government, it would evidently be a great mistake, on the part of our opponents, to direct their attack against it; yet, as we shall presently see, this was the part of our lines singled out for attack in the House of Lords.

"The obstruction and delay from which the former bill had suffered in its passage through the House of Commons were only partially renewed. On March 9 the bill was in committee for the twenty-first day, and on the next day, March 10, the report was received. On March 22

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\* The very name of this once famous "Schedule" recalls the wit of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ:"

"Schedule A, Schedule A!

Spite of Althorp and Grey,

We shall hear of thee, darling, this many a day!"

the bill was read a third time, after a division, in which the ayes were 355, and the noes 239 ; majority, 116.

“ Throughout the debates which took place upon the Reform Bill, while Lord Althorp and I had the greater portion of the labor, and a still larger portion of the responsibility, the palm of eloquence in debate belonged undoubtedly to Lord Stanley. Conscious of my own deficiencies, I had, on the first introduction of the Reform Bill, stipulated with Lord Althorp that Mr. Grant, and not I, should undertake the task, the weightiest that belongs to a leader, of reply at the end of the debate. But Mr. Grant contented himself with general adherence to the principles of the bill, while Lord Stanley, by his animated appeals to the Liberal majority, by his readiness in answering the sophisms of his opponents, by the precision and boldness of his language, by his display of all the great qualities of a Parliamentary orator and an able statesman, successfully vindicated the authority of the Government, and satisfied their supporters in the House of Commons.

“ While Sir Robert Peel was the most eminent, both in weight of argument and in oratorical ability, of the opponents of the bill, Mr. Croker, by his profusion of words, by his warmth of declamation, and by his elaborate working out of details, was perhaps a still more formidable adversary. He told Lord Althorp, in private, that when he discovered the error we had made of confounding the limits of parishes with those of Parliamentary boroughs, he thought himself sure of defeating the bill. But his own statements of details were singularly inaccurate ; and even where the particular point upon which he insisted was not

mistaken, his exaggerations of its importance were repulsive to the House of Commons. Above all, the tide of opinion flowed so rapidly, that all obstacles were swept away, like Canute's chair, by the advancing waves. Thus the bill, which had been introduced to the notice of the House of Commons on March 1, 1831, was finally passed on March 22, 1832, but little impaired in efficiency. It overthrew a system which had been left untouched at the Revolution—a period when the wisest patriots, forced by necessity to transfer the Crown to a foreign prince, had been careful rather to maintain the ancient privileges of the Constitution than to disturb other parts of the existing edifice. The same system had enabled Sir Robert Walpole to consolidate the throne of the House of Hanover, amidst internal and external dangers. But the same system enabled Lord North to maintain his power against the fair demands and justifiable insurrection of the North American Colonies, even after the people had become tired of the contest against our fellow-subjects in America. The same system enabled Mr. Pitt and his successors to increase the public debt from about two hundred and thirty millions to eight hundred millions, and to restrict, by the most severe laws, the right of public meeting and the liberty of the press. The fidelity with which the majority of the House of Commons had supported the French War and its costly armaments, led Pitt to renounce all his early theories upon reform, and induced him to rely on the construction of that House as a firm barrier against democratic, or, as it was then called, Jacobin revolution. But the same willingness to sanction expense on the part of the Government, and to punish excesses on the part of the

people, which had conciliated the opinion of Pitt, had estranged the public mind. Government, by nomination-boroughs, had become odious to the community at large ; and the House of Commons, which voted by a majority of more than a hundred its own extinction, did but sanction the judicial sentence of the country.

“New perils, however, awaited the measure in the House of Lords. In view of the large majority which had rejected the bill in October, Lord Grey had thought it right to consider what should be done if the same obstacles should recur. He and his colleagues could perceive no other resource than that of advising the King to create a large number of peers.”

Then followed a memorable conflict in the House of Lords, ending in the rejection of the Reform Bill, the resignation of the Ministry, the refusal of Sir Robert Peel to form a new Ministry, and the failure of the Duke of Wellington in the attempt. The result was the reappointment of Lord Grey's Cabinet, under distinct assurances from the King that the reform policy should be sustained. The conclusion is thus told :

“When the Cabinet assembled, very serious discussions took place. It was unanimously resolved that the bill must be carried in its integrity, and the question was, how this object was to be effected. It was understood that Sir Herbert Taylor, on the part of the King, would use the royal influence, and that the Duke of Wellington, on his part, would do all in his power to induce the peers to abstain from further opposition to the bill. Sir Herbert

Taylor was very active, in concert with others, in reconciling the King to a course which, although it did not directly overpower the House of Lords by a large creation of peers, yet, upon this occasion, and on a question of the gravest importance, absolutely destroyed their privileges as a House of Parliament, and reduced them to a cipher in the working of the Constitution.

“But the Cabinet was not satisfied with the probable effect of the influences thus brought to bear upon the peers; they thought it necessary that Lord Grey should be armed with the power to create peers in a number sufficient to carry the bill, should any of its essential provisions be interfered with in its further progress through the House of Lords. It was not until the King had given to Lord Grey his solemn promise that, if called upon, he would create peers in a sufficient number for this purpose, that the Ministers consented to resume their offices.

“Lord Althorp, in announcing the restoration of the Ministry, said he could not reveal the nature of the securities for carrying the bill which Lord Grey and his colleagues had obtained, but that he trusted the House had sufficient confidence in him to be satisfied with his assurance that they had that security.

“After this the bill passed triumphantly through committee without much debate, and with no important alteration. It was read a third time by a majority of eighty. The Reform Bill received the royal assent on June 7, 1832. A Boundary Bill, complicated in its details, was successfully carried through both Houses. The Reform Bills for Scotland and Ireland were likewise carried, and on August 16 Parliament was prorogued.

"A session more successful for the Ministry could not well have been. The manly and straightforward conduct of Lord Grey, and the enthusiastic support he received from the people, overcame all opposition.

"It may be a question, however, whether the manner in which the vote of the House of Lords was nullified by the compulsory absence of a great many of the majority, was not more perilous for their authority than the creation of peers which the Cabinet of Lord Grey proposed."\*

Lord Russell's "Recollections" give much information as to his course on various important public questions relating to education, religious toleration, and foreign policy. His general attitude in regard to the Constitution and present condition of Great Britain is summed up as follows :

"Among the most interesting speculations upon which an Englishman can enter, is the question whether the political Constitution under which we live is likely to endure. Montesquieu said that our Constitution would perish whenever the legislative power should become more corrupt than the executive. He was thinking, probably, of the danger arising from bribes in the shape of offices, or lottery-tickets, or even in the grosser form of money, given by an incorruptible Minister to a corrupt majority of the House of Commons. But this kind of corruption had already diminished in the days of Walpole, had farther abated in the days of Pitt, and in our time has almost totally disappeared. Public opinion has stamped it out.

"Let us see, then, what are the positive advantages of

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\* "Recollections," etc., p. 88.

the British form of government, and what are the apparent dangers to which it is exposed.

“1. There is complete personal liberty. A man may think what he pleases, write what he thinks, publish what he writes. Unless he commits some flagrant offense against the laws, and be convicted of that offense, he cannot be punished.

“2. In case of reasonable suspicion of crime, he is entitled to have his case examined by a judge of integrity and learning, whose opinion of his guilt must be confirmed by a jury taken from among the householders of his county.

“3. If a majority of the nation are dissatisfied with the administration of public affairs, their representatives can at once obtain a change of men and measures by a simple declaration of want of confidence.

“This last advantage is one not enjoyed by the United States of America. When a President has lost the confidence of his countrymen and of Congress, he can only be removed by an impeachment, for which there may be no sufficient grounds, or by the expiry of his term of office, which may be in three months, or may not occur for more than three years.

“The defects of the English Constitution affect chiefly the electoral constituents as a body which chooses the House of Commons, and the Parliament as a body empowered to make laws. The electors require to be restrained from bribery and excessive expenses, which affect our reputation and poison representation at its source. The House of Commons must be compelled by public opinion to secure purity of election. \* \* \*

“Some persons have endeavored to bring on at once such a collision as would either destroy the House of Lords, or induce the nation to rally round them as an integral part of the Constitution.

“I beg to submit to such persons the two following remarks :—

“The first is that, if the hereditary privileges of the peers are overthrown, the hereditary prerogative of the Sovereign will also be sacrificed. ‘Do not,’ said an accomplished orator in the House of Commons, many years ago, ‘hang the Crown on the peg of an exception.’ The particular application was mistaken, but the observation has truth to recommend it. The Sovereign does not inherit wisdom any more than the Duke of Norfolk.

“The best Government consists in the union of liberty and order : we are at present in full possession of liberty, but order is sometimes in danger. Now, for the purpose of order, it is material that there should exist in the great bodies of the State the power which is called authority. Nothing more excites reverence than ancient prescriptive privilege ; nothing more moves the imagination than ancient lineage combined with recent achievement. Thus, to see in one assembly the descendants of the Talbots who fought for their country in the fourteenth century, with the Napier who so lately triumphed in Abyssinia, the heir of Marlborough, who won the battle of Blenheim, and of Wellington, the victor at Waterloo, and of Nelson, who fell at Trafalgar, of Cecil, the wise counsellor of Elizabeth, and of Grey, the upright Minister of William IV., with the representatives of Mansfield, and of Camden, of Hardwicke, and of Somers, gives dignity and weight to the House of Peers.

“It is true that every editor of a magazine can furnish, at a few days’ notice, a better Senate than the British House of Lords.

“Happily the people of England give little attention to those fanciful schemes. The nobility of England are not, like the French nobility before the Revolution, slavish sycophants of a court. They are known in their country houses as the free landlords of a free tenantry, promoting social good-will by a becoming hospitality. They are known in courts of justice as foremen of grand juries and magistrates at quarter sessions. They share in national sports, and their wives and daughters visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction.

“Lastly, when a great question arises which requires a display of more than ordinary knowledge of history, more accurate learning, more constitutional lore, and more practical wisdom than is to be found in the usual debates of Parliament, I know not where

‘The general debate,  
The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit

are to be found in greater perfection than among the prelates on the Episcopal bench, the peers of three centuries of nobility, and the recent occupants of the Woolsack.

“Let me add what is, perhaps, the most important security of all—the prospect of any great democratic changes would shake public credit, and bring the nation to its senses; so that I cannot say I feel any alarm lest events should lead to the abolition of the House of Lords, involving, as no doubt it would, the fall of the Monarchy.

"Lastly, to speak of my own work, I can only rejoice that I have been allowed to have my share in the task accomplished in the half century which has elapsed from 1819 to 1869. My capacity, I always felt, was very inferior to that of the men who have attained in past times the foremost place in our Parliament, and in the councils of our Sovereign. I have committed many errors, some of them very gross blunders. But the generous people of England are always forbearing and forgiving to those statesmen who have the good of their country at heart ; like my betters, I have been misrepresented and slandered by those who know nothing of me ; but I have been more than compensated by the confidence and the friendship of the best men of my own political connection, and by the regard and favorable interpretation of my motives which I have heard expressed by my generous opponents, from the days of Lord Castlereagh to these of Mr. Disraeli."\*

These are almost the closing words of the personal reminiscences published by Lord Russell in 1869, and now included in his "Recollections and Suggestions." In the concluding chapters of this volume there are remarks which have peculiar interest for Americans.

He says of the policy of the United States in regard to Canada :

"There occurs from time to time in the press of the United States an explosion of ambition and envy prompted by the desire of adding the Dominion of Canada to the territory of the United States.

"That is, however, far from being a deliberate intention

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\* "Recollections," etc., pp. 176, 179.

of aggrandizement on the part of the great Western Republic.

“Mr. Cobden, who was friendly to our giant son, expressed his opinion that if the lust of dominion should ever possess the Government and the people of the United States, they would look rather to the south than to the north for the gratification of their ambition. He pointed out that the territory to the north gave a return to the efforts of a laborious and frugal workman of only moderate crops of corn, while the great table-land of Mexico produced cotton and sugar, and her mines were rich with silver. He, therefore, reckoned the risk of a war with Great Britain, which might, as in 1812, prove destructive to the trade of the United States, while the land of Mexico, divided by civil war, would, as in the days of General Scott, be easily subdued and as easily held in subjection.

“I know not whether he was acquainted with the saying of a French statesman, engaged in framing the treaty of Versailles of 1763, that those who were masters of North America would, in the end, be masters of the South.

“Be this as it may, the honor of the British Crown is pledged to defend the Queen’s dominions in North America with the utmost forces of the Empire; and it is very improbable that, with such a prospect before them, the President and Secretary of State at Washington will coolly contemplate a hostile invasion of the Queen’s possessions in Canada.

“It is true that the late Government committed a folly when they evacuated the new and expensive fortifications at Quebec, and abandoned the garrison at Halifax. Very few years have elapsed since part of the garrison at Halifax

furnished the means of preserving the Island of Jamaica to the British Crown, and it is not likely that a Canadian garrison would be dispatched to Jamaica with the same readiness, or act with equal efficiency, against a negro insurrection.

“But this error can easily be repaired by a Government which is prepared to defend the Queen’s possessions, and which has a proper sense of the value of British honor. I should, therefore, pay little regard to the speeches which in the United States are called ‘Buncombe,’ and which are as void of meaning as they are hollow in sound.” \*

In regard to the Treaty of Washington he briefly restates his well-known opinions :

“I have stated in the House of Lords, that by the Treaty of Washington the honor of the British nation was tarnished, her character lowered, and her interests endangered. But as every prominent candidate at the late general election had blamed the foreign policy of Mr. Gladstone’s Cabinet, and as that general election had for its result a majority of fifty for Mr. Disraeli in the place of a majority of sixty for Mr. Gladstone, I also stated that in my opinion the British people, by giving a majority to the Conservative candidates, had passed a sentence of condemnation against the authors of the concession which had tarnished the honor, lowered the character, endangered the interests of the British nation. \* \* \*

“For the injuries to property inflicted by the ‘Alabama’ on American merchant vessels an ample compensation, not to say an extravagant and inordinate compensation, of

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\* “Recollections,” etc., p. 362.

upward of three millions sterling has been paid, and I will not say anything further upon this subject." \*

In three different passages of this book, Lord Russell disarms American criticism by frankly admitting himself to have been in error as regards the escape of the *Alabama*. He first says :

"In a single instance, that of the escape of the '*Alabama*,' we fell into error. I thought it my duty to wait for the report of the law officers of the crown ; but I ought to have been satisfied with the opinion of Sir Robert Collier, and to have given orders to detain the *Alabama* at Birkenhead." †

Again he says :

"Had Lord Granville agreed to see me before he sent his mission to Washington, I should have pointed out to him the weak parts of our case ; I should have said, as Lord Chief Justice Cockburn has since done, that after I had received the opinion of Sir Robert Collier, there was a *prima facie* case for detaining the '*Alabama*,' and that I had failed in not doing so during the interval of four days which elapsed before I received the legal opinion of the law officers of the crown. Gen. Washington, in like manner had, from mistake, allowed British ships to be captured within the jurisdiction of the United States." ‡

And yet again, most emphatically of all :

"I assent entirely to the opinions of the Lord Chief Justice of England, that the '*Alabama*' ought to have been detained during the four days in which I was waiting for

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\* "Recollections," pp. 366-7. † "Recollections," p. 235.

‡ "Recollections," p. 332.

the opinion of the law officers. But I think that the fault was not that of the Commissioners of Customs ; it was my fault, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I should have been glad to have admitted that fault as plainly and as explicitly as General Washington admitted his mistake in 1793." \*

From the conclusion of this book I take these passages, which are surely most honorable to their author :

"In preparing a conclusion to 'Recollections and Suggestions,' which have been the object of memory or meditation for sixty years, it is fit that I should make a general avowal of the impression I have received with regard to my own part in public life, and that which others have taken with whom I have been associated, or to whom I have been opposed.

"My persuasion is that I have been received with quite as much favor as I deserved. I think what I have done well has been honestly supported ; and that where my measures have miscarried, the failure has been owing not to undue animosity or malignant misrepresentation, but to errors which I have committed from mistaken judgment or a mistaken appreciation of facts.

"I believe I may say, with many other of the leading men who, since the Revolution of 1689, have had the direction of public affairs, that my ends have been honest, and that I have looked to the happiness of my countrymen as the object to which my efforts ought to be directed.

"Speaking generally, and with some exceptions, I am willing to give the same testimony to those with whom

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\* "Recollections," p. 334.

I have been associated, and to the chief leaders to whom I have been opposed. \* \* \*

"From 1815 to 1873 there has been a course of gradual progress toward civil and religious liberty. There is nothing so conservative as Progress. England is in the full enjoyment of civil and religious freedom. I hope she may never descend from this height, and that the wish of the great poet, under whose roof I conclude, may see his vision fulfilled, and become the creed and the confidence of a better and a stronger age of mankind :

'Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet ;  
Above her shook the starry lights,  
She heard the torrents meet,

'There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self gather'd in her prophet mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind,

'Then step she down thro' town and field,  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men revealed  
The fullness of her face.'

"RUSSELL.

"ADDWORTH, October 29, 1874."\*

EARL RUSSELL AS SEEN BY OTHERS.

Lord Russell was born in London, August 19, 1792,<sup>1</sup> being the third son of the sixth Duke of Bedford. His mother was Georgiana Elizabeth, daughter of Viscount

\* "Recollections," etc., pp. 376, 374.

Torrington. In 1813 he was first chosen to Parliament for the family borough of Tavistock. In 1830 he was Paymaster of the Forces, in the Grey ministry ; in 1835 he was Secretary of State for the Home Department under Lord Melbourne, and afterward Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. In 1846 he became Prime Minister, and subsequently held lower offices in the Cabinet, an act for which he has been criticised. In 1865 he was again Premier, retiring in 1866. He had sat for forty-seven years in the House of Commons, when, in July, 1861, he was elevated to the peerage, with the titles of Earl Russell and Viscount Amberley. He has been twice married : in 1831, to Adelaide, daughter of Thomas Lister, Esq., and widow of Lord Ribblesdale ; and, in 1841, to Lady Frances Anne Maria, daughter of the Earl of Minto. He has had children by both marriages ; and his eldest son—by the second marriage—Lord Amberley, has been Member of Parliament for Nottingham, and is well known in America.

“ Who does not know,” says Wemyss Reid, “ the personal characteristics of Lord Russell ? Who has not seen the square and stunted figure, the large head, the big mouth, the pugnacious nose ? No one who enters the House of Lords can mistake his identity. He sits below the gangway on the Liberal side of the House, his head and features almost hidden by a huge broad-brimmed hat. It appears to be a veritable Cave of Adullam which he has formed for himself in this part of the House. Here he is joined at times by Lord Clanricarde, Lord Westbury, or other discontented Liberals, and with them he holds frequent conversations in a voice which almost drowns that of the man who is supposed to have possession of the House for the

time being. When he rises to speak, he places his hat upon the seat behind him, clasps his hands behind his back, turns away from the reporters, and says what he has to say in a grumbling monotone.

"His speech has become so indistinct now, that but little of what he says reaches the peers on the other side of the House, and men like Lord Grey, who do not care much for appearances, and who still regard Lord Russell's utterances as important, will seat themselves close to him whilst he is speaking, and, with hand to ear, endeavor to catch all that he says. It does not appear, however, that it is from inability to speak clearly and distinctly that he makes his speeches in this unsatisfactory manner. It would rather seem that it is from sheer contempt for the people he is addressing; since, when he chooses, he can speak out in such a manner as to make himself heard all over the House. When he does this, he allows those present to witness once again the old-fashioned peculiarities of pronunciation which have always distinguished him." \*

"Lord Russell," says another writer, "though he has wanted the physical requisites and the temperament of an orator, though he has a dry and hesitating manner, a heavy but not powerful voice, a drawling tone, and the obsolete pronunciation of good society in the days of the Regency, has always been one of the readiest and most efficient of debaters, possessing that faculty of keen and direct retort which is like skillful sword-play. He would probably have been a greater statesman, as he would certainly have been a greater speaker, if he had possessed a more vigorous con-

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 124.

stitution, and, what is often a consequence of it, higher animal spirits. Ordinarily, there is a chilling coldness or lassitude about him ; and it is only when 'the steam is on,' that 'languid Johnny soars to glorious John,' and shows himself to be of 'Tydeus' kind, whose little body lodged a mighty mind.' During his younger days, he and Francis Horner were set down as the two almost hopeless invalids of the party ; and Lord Russell's prospects of distinction and ultimate leadership were generally dismissed with the reflection that neither his health nor life could be counted on. Feeble health has tracked him through the sixty years of his public career ; and its dangers have only been carefully fought off through a long struggle for existence. This physical infirmity has, no doubt, had its political consequences. Lord Russell's restless activity has been somewhat dreary ; and there has been, moreover, a lack of continuity about it. It has been capricious and fitful. His sudden and unexpected movements, which have often disconcerted his friends quite as much as his enemies, have had their origin, possibly, in this want of staying power quite as much as in any disposition to intrigue."\*

"Lord Russell," says Wemyss Reid, "is hardly a great man in the highest sense of the word, but in some matters he holds a higher position than any other of his contemporaries. As an authority upon all questions affecting the Constitution, for instance, he is undoubtedly the highest we have ; and it is a genuine treat to hear him laying down the law upon one of these questions. He does so with judicial clearness, and with more than judicial force. Upon

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 134.

many questions of administrative reform, too, the country is more largely indebted to him than to any other statesman of modern times. His active brain, his restless industry, and his constant desire to be doing something which shall keep him before the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, have led him again and again to take in hand great works from which other statesmen had shrunk ; whilst his self-confidence and his genuine ability combined, have enabled him to conduct many of those works to a successful issue.

“ It was an evil day—evil for himself, evil for his country, and evil for some foreign powers—in which Lord Russell became English Foreign Secretary. From first to last his foreign policy has been an unfortunate one, and it has also been one which, had England not accepted the doctrine of non-intervention, would have led us into some very serious scrapes.

“ When he was Home Secretary or Prime Minister we had him to ourselves, and we understood him. We took his letters—what a host of them he has given to us !—for just as much as they were worth, and no more. We made allowances for his constant love of intermeddling ; and we could even forgive his chilling personal *hauteur*. But it was different when he was representative of England in its relations with foreign courts. The Poles, the Danes, the Russians, could hardly be expected to understand the peculiarities of our Foreign Secretary ; and even when his letters were as innocent as those of Mr. Toots himself, they believed that all the big words they contained, all the advice they offered, or rather thrust upon foreign powers, meant something more than they really did. They had no conception that, unless he were prepared to support his

words by deeds, a minister would venture to sit down in his room in Whitehall, and calmly pen dispatches dictating, in language which itself was almost offensive, to some of the most powerful States in Europe, and holding out open encouragement to struggling causes. Thus it happened that Lord Russell got us into some very humiliating scrapes during his tenure of the Foreign Office, and did not a little to efface the impression which his great success in matters of domestic policy had made on the minds of his countrymen." \*

It seems to be admitted by all critics, that Lord Russell takes small pains to soften his own manner or to propitiate friend or foe. "There has always been a sort of innocent nudity about him. He never dresses himself up or disguises his motives. Whenever he has intrigued—and nearly every statesman, probably, does intrigue more or less against his rivals of the opposite party or his own—he has done so in the most transparent manner. When he has wanted an office filled by any one else in a Government of which he was a member, he has said so and taken it. \* \* \* He has plotted as openly as the conspirators in Canning's mock-play of *The Rovers*. If he had been engaged in the Gunpowder Treason, he would have walked down to the House of Parliament at midday with the matches in his hand and the barrel of gunpowder under his arm. When his friends have been in office, and he has for any reason been out of it, he has spoken his mind of them as freely, and with as little regard to the policy of seeming to play the part of a generous patron or an indul-

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 121.

gent apologist, as if he and they had sat upon opposite benches during the whole of their political lives." \*

Much of his personal unpopularity is attributable, no doubt, to this peculiarity of temperament.

"When we go through the long list of the Earl's public acts; when we read the speeches which he made fifty years ago, on behalf of causes dear to the English people, and when we trace his course through the half century which has since elapsed, our wonder is that a man who has undoubtedly done so much, and who has deserved so well of his countrymen, should have enjoyed so little personal popularity, and so small an amount of private sympathy and esteem.

"Take up the political cartoons of the last thirty years, and you will find no one whom the pictorial satirist has so frequently sought to make ridiculous as Lord Russell. Turn over the leaves of a file of the *Times*, or any other journal of professedly Liberal opinions, and you will find no one—not even the most staunch of Tory statesmen—who is so often rebuked, so often admonished, so often abused, as the man who, since the days of the Duke of Wellington's administration, has been one of the most prominent members of the Liberal party. How comes it that this is the case? How is it that John, Earl Russell, despite his great public services, and despite all that he has done for the party with which he is identified, and the abundant success that has attended his political life, is yet one who can hardly be called a great man in the highest sense of the term?

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 126, 127.

“Partly this is unquestionably to be attributed to the fact that Lord Russell has throughout his life been a victim to that cold *hauteur* which seems to be one of the sacred traditions of true Whiggism. This *hauteur* has nothing in common with the ordinary and natural pride of aristocratic birth or high social position. Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston were both proud men, and against one of them, at least, it was made a matter of serious accusation that his demeanor was haughty and ‘aristocratic.’ But there was nothing in either of these men of the offensive stiffness which has constantly characterized Lord Russell, and which was so prominent a feature in the characters of many of the leading Whig statesmen of the past century. Few could ever become enthusiastic about ‘Lord John,’ or if any one were rash enough to be tempted into momentary enthusiasm, the ebullition was instantly checked by a chilling word, or look, or letter.

“We have at this moment before us a vivid recollection of a characteristic little incident in the Earl’s career. Seven or eight years ago he spent a few weeks in the autumn in the neighborhood of the Perthshire village of Blairgowrie, and the sturdy Scotch peasantry, resolving to do honor to the great Liberal statesman, invited him to a ‘banquet’ at Blairgowrie. The writer happened to be in the neighborhood at the time, and procuring a ticket for the banquet—which was about the roughest village feast at which he was ever present—he went to Blairgowrie to witness Lord Russell’s reception. In due time the famous Whig minister came. The people were delighted at having him in their midst, and they cheered him with a lusty vigor which would have done credit to Yorkshire lungs.

“At the door of the Town Hall, or the Market House, which was the scene of the banquet, the Earl descended from his carriage ; he stood a moment in the doorway, giving some directions to his servants, and the crowd pressed round him cheering. One respectable-looking man who was standing very near was particularly enthusiastic. Upon him the Earl turned with a freezing look and a haughty gesture. . ‘ Have the goodness not to make such a noise, sir ! ’ said he, and the poor Scot shrunk away utterly abashed, and with doubtless very different feelings with respect to ‘ Johnny Russell ’ from those which he had entertained toward him a few minutes previously. And this was a most characteristic scene. Very vain, and not at all insensible to the charms of popular applause, Lord Russell has yet this peculiar coldness and haughtiness of manner which chills the enthusiasm of his admirers, and deprives him of not a little of the popularity which is undoubtedly his due. \* \* \*

“ The Earl seems all his life long to have looked upon politicians and political parties as worms beneath his feet, or as a set of chessmen, to be knocked about and shuffled into a corner with as little ceremony as the player shows in handling his ivory soldiers. He has acted upon certain well-defined principles ; he has been ‘ the consistent friend of civil and religious liberty ’—no one will deny that—but what have been his feelings toward the people who have benefited by his exertions ? In what light does he view the operatives, the Dissenters, the Roman Catholics, the Jews, on whose behalf he has interested himself ? Can the Grand Mogul have a more hearty contempt for the meanest of his subjects than John, Earl Russell, has for the clients whose

cause he has fought for sixty years with such marked ability? We doubt whether he even remembers that they are vertebrated animals." \*

"At one time, early in his career, Lord Russell appears to have been half-minded to abandon politics for literature. The only fruit, however, of this dim intention was the poetic remonstrance which it called forth from Moore; and it had probably no deeper root in his character than the habit of men to idealize the pursuits which they do not follow, or follow only as a diversion, and to find disappointment and irritation in those which are the business of their lives. It is the old story of Horace's first Satire. The soldier would be a merchant, the farmer would be a lawyer. Whatever Lord Russell may have proposed, his tutelary genius disposed of him more wisely. As a writer, he might have earned a section in some appendix to Horace Walpole's 'Royal and Noble Authors;' but he would have been simply a dried plant in a *hortus siccus*, and not a living growth in a true garden. Lord Russell's taste for literature has not contributed anything of much value to it; but it has enlarged, enriched, and illustrated his statesmanship; and it has tintured his oratory. The ablest and most cultivated, if he be not the wisest, of living American politicians is in the habit of saying that Lord Russell's speeches, whatever they may be as they are delivered, are, as they are printed, the finest specimens of contemporary English eloquence. The opinion needs qualification; but it is true that they have a clearness of phrase, and a sharp precision of thought which are not usual in

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 116, 120.

spoken language ; and there is a certain infusion of history and literature in them which gives them a scholarly charm. Lord Russell's literary efforts are valuable chiefly as illustrating his qualities as a statesman. They show that he has acquired the various knowledge, and has the intellectual tastes and aptitudes, which become his position ; and they are here and there enriched by sagacious reflections and happy aphorisms. But it might, perhaps, have been as well for his reputation if the studies out of which they have sprung had informed his political career, instead of entering a separate appearance. Depth of research, maturity of thought, and continuity of mental effort, are scarcely to be looked for in works which are mere episodes and incidents of a busy career. Can any one suppose that Lord Russell has anything to say which will make his 'Essays on the Rise and Progress of Christianity in the West' of much use to the English reader who possesses Dean Milman's 'History of Latin Christianity?' Germs of thought which in their development might come to something, first sketches and outlines of ideas which, if filled up, might be found to have value, are sure to be scattered in their crude beginning over the promised work. The subject is one for statesmen to study, but scarcely for a statesman to write upon, unless he be also a scholar and a theologian. But Lord Russell's moral fearlessness is well known ; and it is as conspicuously displayed in undertaking the History of Western Christianity, from the reign of Tiberius to the Council of Trent, as it would have been if he had volunteered for the naval and surgical services which Sydney Smith's joke declared him capable of undertaking. In his literary efforts, which have been incessant

from boyhood to advanced old age, Lord Russell has shown a taste or an ambition rather than a capacity; or, at any rate, the taste and the ambition have missed the leisure which could develop them into capacity."\*

Lord Russell has been an author, though less conspicuous in that sphere than Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone. He wrote, many years since, a novel called "The Nun of Arrouca," and a drama called "Don Carlos." The *Westminster Review* said severely of this last that "there is not a vestige of poetical feeling, nor a single passage that rises above commonplace, not a character or creation in the whole *dramatis personæ*; they are mere automata; a more undignified, pitiful puppet than Philip could not be walked through five acts of any play; nor a more puling, characterless personage than Don Carlos, whose mawkish sentimentality would overpower even a boarding-school miss of the last generation."

He wrote also, in early life, a book called "Essays and Sketches of Life and Character, by a Gentleman who has left his Lodgings," the assumed name of the editor being Joseph Skillet. He also published the "Life of William. Lord Russell" (1815); "Essay on the History of the English Government and Constitution" (1821); "History of the Affairs of Europe since the Peace of Utrecht" (1824); "The Establishment of the Turks in Europe; an Historical Essay" (1828); "The Causes of the French Revolution" (1832); "Correspondence of John, Fourth Duke of Bedford" (1843); "Memoirs, Journals, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore" (1853-6); and "Memorials

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 137.

and Correspondence of Charles James Fox" (1854); several Inaugural Addresses; three "Letters on the State of Ireland" (1868-9); and two volumes of his own speeches and dispatches (1870). But though a faithful and laborious editor, he has always been a dull writer, and his fame will not rest upon this part of his labors. Fortunately, it has a secure foundation in his actual public service.

"To write the history of his achievements would be to write a large portion of the history of the past half century. No doubt much has been owing to opportunity; but Lord Russell did not simply use the opportunities which came to him, itself not always an easy task: he made them. The beneficial legislation of the past forty years has sprung from the Reform Act of 1832: and to that measure Lord Russell, in his own solitary person, stood related much as Mr. Cobden, Mr. Villiers, and Sir Robert Peel were collectively related to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, or as Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli to the Reform Bill of 1867. He was the agitator as well as the legislator; the pioneer not less than the cultivator. As the present Prime Minister has said, not less truly than generously, if orders were given for civil as for military services, Lord Russell's breast would be studded with stars, and crosses, and ribbons." \*

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 139.



## V.

### EARL GRANVILLE.



“**N**O one can have spent an evening in the House of Lords without having his attention attracted by a remarkable face, which is at present to be seen on the ministerial side of the House. It does not look like an English face. That, at least, will be the visitor's first impression. It is a French face, rather ; the bland, smiling, but not eminently intellectual countenance of a French statesman under the House of Orleans. In repose, though handsome, it has a somewhat sleepy expression that does not prepossess the gazer in favor of its owner ; but when lighted up with a smile, as it is very frequently lighted up, its expression becomes at once very handsome and very winning, and no one can watch it long without feeling that those bland and comely features have in them an indefinable attractiveness.

“ Lord Granville, \* \* \* \* as friends and opponents alike admit, performs the duties of his post as [Liberal] leader of the House of Lords with a tact and discrimination which cannot be too highly commended. The

office, which would to most men be a thorny and irksome task, seems little more to him than a pleasant recreation. While other men, of greater intellectual power and more richly endowed with the highest qualities of statesmanship, would grow prematurely old, and worn, and irritable, under the difficulties besetting such a post, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs \* looks to-day twenty years younger than his age as it is recorded in 'Debrett,' and goes through his work with an ease and grace, and a never-failing flow of good spirits and even temper, that must make him the object of every man's envy.

"He never speaks without that courteous smile, which, somehow or other, seems to disarm unfriendly criticism; he never falls into the traps set by sour or disappointed members of his own party; he meets the assaults which come from the open foe in front, with a confidence which can only be likened to that of the child too innocent to have learned that there is such a thing as evil in the world.

"As you sit and watch him going through his nightly task in the gilded chamber in which the peers deliberate—standing up boldly to meet the weighty criticisms of a Cairns, or the fierce onslaught of a Salisbury; soothing with a tact which is almost feminine the irritable grumblings of a Clanricarde, or laughing away with charming good nature the sneers of a Westbury—you are compelled to wonder whether the grace and graciousness which always surround him are derived from art or from nature; whether he has been from youth upward the suave and fascinating master of men, or has acquired the manner which is so

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\* Written in 1872.

attractive and so irresistible by long years of painful study." \*

"The Right Honorable Granville George Leveson-Gower, second Earl Granville, was born on the 11th of May, 1815—being the eldest son of the first Earl, who was himself a younger son of the first Marquis of Stafford." The first Earl "was, in 1815, when forty-two years of age, raised to the peerage as Viscount Granville, and in 1833, when sixty, was created simultaneously Baron Leveson and Earl Granville. Those three coronets were the rewards of his good service as British Ambassador at Paris and previously at St. Petersburg. He had married, before his advancement to the House of Lords, the daughter of the fifth Duke of Devonshire—the Lady Henrietta Elizabeth Cavendish—from whom was born to him, among other children, his son and successor, the present Earl Granville.

"The latter, having been educated first of all at Eton, and afterward at Christchurch, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1834, being enrolled as honorary D. C. L. by his University nearly thirty years later on, in 1863, was at twenty years of age, namely, in 1835, appointed attaché at Paris under his father, then the British Ambassador at the Court of King Louis Philippe. So that Lord Granville's knowledge of the diplomatic profession dates back over considerably more than half his lifetime.

"During nearly ten of the earlier years of his political career, the now Colonial Secretary, under his then courtesy title of Lord Leveson, sat in the House of Commons, first of all from 1837 to 1840, as Member for Morpeth,

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 71-4.

and afterward, from 1841 to 1846, as Member for Lichfield. While yet representing the constituency of Morpeth, he was named for the first time to office by the then Premier, Viscount Melbourne.

"This occurred in 1842, when the post allotted to him was, appropriately enough for an ex-attaché, that of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for that department being at the time no other than Lord Palmerston. At the close of the Melbourne Administration, in the autumn of the following year, September, 1841, he passed with the rest of his colleagues into Opposition."\*

On the death of his father, in January, 1846, he succeeded to the Earldom.

"Although twice married, Lord Granville has no direct heir to his title—his brother, the Hon. Edward Frederick Leveson Gower, now M. P. for Bodmin, being his heir-presumptive. Upon the Earl's first marriage, which took place in 1842, he espoused the widow of the late Sir Ferdinand Acton, the mother of the present Sir John Acton, eighth baronet, Marie Louise Peline, the only child of Emeric Joseph, the Duc de Dalberg. Left a widower in 1863, Lord Granville married again in 1865, his second wife being Castalia Rosalind, the youngest daughter of Walter Campbell, Esquire, of Islay. Among his titles of honor it may be mentioned that, besides being a Privy Councillor, the Earl has been for some years a Knight of the Garter, that he was long since elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, that he is Chancellor of the University of London, and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, to which

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\* "The Gladstone Government," by a Templar, pp. 229, 230.

last-mentioned office he was nominated upon its being vacated by the death of Lord Palmerston." \*

"Of all the members of Mr. Gladstone's Government," says the critic of the *Daily News*, "Lord Granville is probably the one who, during the past few years, has risen most rapidly and steadily in public opinion. Not very long ago it was customary to regard him as a statesman who illustrated little more than the charm of good manners in politics. He was thought to be a Minister of deportment, whose chief business it was to yield gracefully to irresistible majorities in the Lords, or to smooth a way for such small reforms as were offered to that assembly by the semi-Liberal Administrations which preceded Mr. Gladstone's. He was spoken of as a courtier politician, a statesman of the *salon*, versed at best in the small diplomacy of politics. This prejudice is of old standing, and was, perhaps, confirmed by the fact that it was from the Royal Household that Lord Granville entered upon the career in which he has since achieved all but the highest place, with probably the succession to the highest place, in the Liberal party. For the first two years of Lord John Russell's first Administration he held the office of Master of the Buckhounds. He had been Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs for a few months before the break-up of the Melbourne Government, having previously served an apprenticeship to diplomacy as attaché in Paris during his father's embassy there; and had sat for ten years in the House of Commons before his succession to the peerage in 1846. But his political career really began with his transfer, by Lord John Russell, in 1848, from

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\* "The Gladstone Government," p. 236.

the charge of her Majesty's Buckhounds to the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. Great was the clamor which this appointment raised below the gangway. 'Is thy servant a dog?' said Manchester, indignant at being handed over to the Master of the Buckhounds. Mr. Bright, we believe, made himself the mouthpiece of its anger in the House of Commons, and spoke his mind with that frank disregard of persons which has always characterized him. The appointment was denounced as a piece of nepotism on Lord John Russell's part. Very much to his credit, Mr. Bright not long afterward admitted that Lord Granville's conduct at the Board of Trade had justified Lord John Russell's selection, and had not justified his own assault. Lord John Russell, with pardonable perversity, was more deeply aggrieved by the retraction than by the original charge. The word nepotism, naturally odious to a Russell, rankled in his mind; and he ridiculed the idea that family affection for a descendant of his grandmother could influence his political appointments. Lord Russell's grandmother does, indeed, carry the mind back to a period of history apparently too remote to affect Ministerial combinations. For a time, however, the unfilial allusion of her grandson, and his ostentatious indifference to her posterity outside the House of Bedford, gave the old lady an historical resurrection; and Lord Russell's grandmother, as the Mother Eve of an entire Whig Cabinet, became a subject of genealogical interest. It was on this or on some similar occasion that Mr. Bernal Osborne accounted, on physiological principles, for the ricketiness of their legislative offspring, on the ground that all the members of the Government were nearly related to each other. \* \* \* \*

“The claims of elder politicians, and the necessity of assigning some of the most important offices of State to members of the House of Commons, had confined Lord Granville to titular and ornamental posts in the successive Administrations of Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Russell. With the exception of the few months, during which he held the office of Foreign Secretary in the declining days of Lord John Russell’s Government, the changes of his official career had consisted in his going from the Presidency of the Council to the Duchy of Lancaster, and from the Duchy of Lancaster to the Presidency of the Council, as Lord John Russell’s political exigencies seemed to require. With a full recollection of the many high qualities and the great services of that veteran statesman, one must admit that, out of office, he somewhat resembles a hermit-crab without a shell, and has seldom been scrupulous in dispossessing younger colleagues who have found a retreat that he covets. The manner in which Lord Granville accommodated himself to the caprices of his old chief showed not only good nature and self-denial, but a confidence which, in its readiness to wait, was itself a sign of power. Once, indeed, greatness seemed likely to be prematurely thrust upon him. In 1859, Lord Granville had a narrow escape of himself becoming Premier. On the retirement of Lord Derby, the Queen had to choose between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell ; and she seems to have thought that Lord Granville lay between them. It was supposed that as the Duke of Portland was the mean between Mr. Fox and Lord North, so the claims of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston might find their adjustment in Lord Granville. The overture happily

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failed, through the refusal of Lord John Russell to acquiesce in this arrangement. Lord Granville is to be congratulated on the break-down of the attempted compromise. To preside over the jealousies and disputes of two rivals, animated by all the bitterness of an old guard and the sharper acerbity of a new reconciliation, would not have been a very comfortable task while it lasted ; and to be a merely titular Premier, chosen to the first place because he was then only of the second rank in politics, is not a position which any one respecting himself would care to occupy in administration or in history." \*

The London *Times*, of June 13, 1859, gave the following semi-official account of this negotiation :

"Her Majesty, after listening to all the objections which Lord Granville had to offer, commanded him to attempt to form an administration which should at once be strong in ability and parliamentary influence, and should at the same time comprehend within itself a full and fair representation of all the sections into which the Liberal party has notoriously been divided. Feeling, probably, that it might be urged as an objection to this course that Lord Granville, who has never yet held the office of Prime Minister, would thus be placed in a position paramount to that occupied by Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, each of whom had served her long and faithfully in many high offices of state, and had each filled the office of First Minister of the Crown, her Majesty was pleased to observe that she had in the first instance turned her thoughts towards Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell. Her Majesty

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 141, 5.

felt, however, that to make so marked a distinction as is implied in the choice of one or other of two statesmen so full of years and honors, and possessing so just a claim on the consideration of the Queen, would be a very invidious and unwelcome task. Her Majesty also observed that Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston appeared to represent different sections of the Liberal party; Lord Palmerston the more Conservative, and Lord John Russell the more popular section. Impressed with these difficulties, her Majesty cast her eyes on Lord Granville, the acknowledged Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords, in whom both Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston had been in the habit of placing confidence, and who might have greater facilities for uniting the whole Liberal party under one administration than could be enjoyed by either of the sectional leaders."

It seems to be universally admitted that, after Lord Granville took office under Mr. Gladstone, he showed higher ability than had before been conceded to him; and that in a position of peculiar difficulty, because he represented in the House of Lords an administration which was there in the minority.

"The Leadership of the House of Lords, previous to Mr. Gladstone's Administration, did not really require any considerable faculty. No measures were sent from the Lower to the Upper Chamber which seriously exercised the patience of the Peers. The time was one of truce in domestic politics; organic changes and great administrative reforms were not thought of; and collision, or even marked difference of opinion between the two Houses, was of rare occurrence. Since Mr. Gladstone took office,

however, all that has been changed.\* First as Colonial, and afterwards as Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville has had opportunities of displaying that talent for business of which he gave promise at the Board of Trade, and which he showed conspicuously as Chairman of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1862. He has the faculty, which some great statesmen have lacked, of prompt and decisive action, and of recognising the point at which further inquiry, however speculatively interesting or desirable for the sake of theoretic completeness, has really no bearing upon practice, except to delay what should be done at once. The tenure of the two great offices of state which he has occupied in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet has marked an era both in our colonial and in our foreign policy ; and the importance of his administration may be measured by the outcry which has been raised against it. The past few years have been a period of transition. They have brought with them the delicate and difficult task of committing in larger and larger proportion to our colonies the essential work of self-maintenance and self-defence, as the condition of self-government, without loosening the moral and political ties which unite them to the Mother Country in one common allegiance. So far from Lord Granville having pursued a policy of separation, he has, on the contrary, laid the foundations of that readjustment which is the condition of the integrity of the Empire. A bond is not always the weaker for being loose, and allowing freedom of motion. When it is tightened, it is the more likely to strain and snap. With regard to his foreign policy, it

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\* Written in 1872.

would be strange, if anything could be strange in political partizanship, to find it attacked by those who were foremost in denouncing what they used to call the swagger and braggadocio of Lord Palmerston, and the meddling and muddling of Lord Russell. Lord Granville unmeddles and unmuddles. Under him we are no longer startled by what Mr. Carlyle, describing Lord Palmerston's foreign policy, called the sudden appearance of Great Britain in the character of *Hercules-Harlequin*, waving her huge sword of sharpness over field-mice, to see how they will like it. Lord Granville declines to act the part of '*Hercules-Harlequin*, the Attorney Triumphant, the World's Busybody,' and we hear outcries about the decline of British influence and the humiliation of the British name, The fact is that to conduct a retreat from positions which ought never to have been taken up is not in itself a very splendid and imposing business ; but it is a very necessary one ; and, on the whole, it has been well performed. The courage to withdraw from a false position must, however, be proved to be courage by the spirit and firmness with which, when occasion arises, the interests and honor of England are vindicated against whatever antagonist, and in spite of seduction or threat. To Lord Granville it has fallen to effect the transition from a policy of vicious meddling in foreign and colonial affairs to one of judicious abstention, the effect of which, so far from isolating England, is to leave her ready with undegraded authority, with unwasted resources, and with free judgment and conscience, to interpose with decision, when duty to herself and to the world may require her to do so. Instead of snapping and barking round every European fight, her voice should be

like that of Sir Walter Scott's old hound Maida, of whom he said, 'He seldom opens his mouth, but when he does, he shakes the hills.' " \*

" Lord Granville's success as a Leader of the House of Lords and as a diplomatist is in great part attributable to this faculty of patience. A quick-tempered or an angry negotiator would almost certainly, during the past few years, have embroiled us with America and Russia, and probably with France and Germany too. An irritable or an impulsive leader would soon have the House of Lords in open revolt. The work of passing great measures of change through an assembly, a majority of which distrusts and hates them, and of which the minority that gives them a sort of support only half likes them, is by no means easy. A knowledge of men and a tolerance of their prejudices, a certain art in humoring them, a faculty of coaxing, such as a kindly physician employs towards a fractious patient—in other words, "a learned spirit of human dealings," is essential in such an assembly. Mere suavity or benignity, however, would not suffice. There must be firmness beneath it, and the power of substituting firmness in manner for it. In this Lord Granville is by no means deficient. He is capable of a certain sub-acidity which declares itself beneath his most honeyed words. His diplomatic correspondence bears witness to his power of saying, on occasion, sharp and pointed things. He can disarm an opponent with an air of winning politeness, and transfix him with an appearance of almost affectionate solicitude. He can insinuate a taunt with courteous deference, and suggest to

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 148.

an antagonist in terms the most seductive that he is making a fool of himself. Lord Granville has been described as distilling a softening and soothing unction over political affairs ; but even such antagonists as Lord Salisbury and Lord Cairns have sometimes had occasion to say of this unction, in the language of the Common Prayer version of the Book of Psalms, 'Let not his precious balms break my head.'" \*

"Lord Granville's most ardent admirers cannot claim for him renown as a statesman of the highest type, or a man of supreme intellectual power. \* \* \* He would be a bold man who would say that Lord Granville had the commanding personal gifts which compel success in politics. We suppose we must admit that during his many years of faithful and honorable service he has done nothing which can be called great. \* \* \* But it is not to the mere fact that the bluest of our blue blood runs in his veins that his universal popularity, and his advancement to the great position which he now occupies, are to be attributed. Something more than family influence, and the ties of kindred, is needed to explain the fact that men whose public services are far greater than his, and with whose intellectual endowments he has nothing to compare, are willing to serve under his leadership ; and that he is able to fill the most difficult post, perhaps, which can fall to the lot of any statesman, in a manner which at once satisfies his foes and delights his friends.

"What, then, is the secret of his success? Few can doubt that it lies in that wonderful urbanity, that never-

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 153.

failing grace and courteousness of manner, to which allusion has already been made. Lord Granville is a great nobleman. He is exalted in rank ; he wields all the power which large wealth bestows upon its possessors ; he has at his command family influence, which can best be described by the one word, irresistible ; he is, in short, a *grand seigneur*, enjoying all the rights and dignities which appertain to such a character in a country in which an even exaggerated deference is paid to the claims of wealth and rank.

“ But most assuredly no nobleman ever more thoroughly acted up to the maxim *noblesse oblige* than the Foreign Secretary. No one can watch him long or closely without seeing that he feels compelled alike by his very rank, and wealth, and influence, to show the world that these things are, after all, mere accidents. To use a homely phrase, Lord Granville, when in the company of his social inferiors, always seems to be apologising for the fact that he is an earl and a great nobleman. His chief desire seems to be to put those around him at their ease, and to effect this object he adopts in his speech and demeanor a courtesy which is altogether alien to our ‘rough island tongue’ and rough island manners. But there is nothing of Mr. Heep’s ‘umbleness’ in it. Indeed, though one would think it exaggerated in almost any other man, it seems natural to Lord Granville—a happy gift, which belongs to him alone amongst Englishmen.

“ What wonder, then, that the Earl is popular with the people? No one can be brought in contact with him without falling a willing and contented victim to the wonderful glamor which surrounds him. With his equals, of course, his demeanor is somewhat different. But in his intercourse

with them, also, he gives one the impression of a man bent upon studying and adapting himself to the wants of others, rather than upon advancing his own interests. With what a charming simplicity and gracefulness he yields the palm to those who have fairly won it from him ! And how unassuming and inoffensive he is in the hour of victory—the hour which, after all, tests men's qualities more than any other. Statesmen who are intellectual giants compared to Lord Granville, think it no shame to be overcome by this bland and ever-courteous foe ; and his rivals in his own party yield to him a deference such as they would not pay to the ablest statesman or the haughtiest nobleman in the House.

“In social life Lord Granville shines as a star of the first magnitude ; and his happy knack of bringing into the House of Lords something of the atmosphere of the drawing-room, aids him not a little in his difficult task. Who can have passed from the House of Commons—hot, turbulent, angry—to the House of Lords, without being struck by the peace and good-breeding which flourishes under Lord Granville's rule in the latter place ? And wherever he goes the noble Earl is the same. No man can preside over a social gathering with greater success ; no man can do more to overcome the difficulties attending any great public undertaking—such as the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 ; no man can blend more harmoniously the conflicting elements of society.

“A hundred anecdotes might be told to illustrate his irrepressible good-nature, and his absolute freedom from all pride of birth or place. It seems but yesterday—alas !

it is ten long years ago\*—that the writer saw him on May 1, 1862, broom in hand, sweeping up the scattered refuse which lay about the dais under the dome of the Exhibition building, half-an-hour before the time fixed for the opening ceremony. He swept then, with a vigor which said as much for his undiminished physical powers as for his carelessness of the restraints of mere etiquette. And one Easter Monday, two or three years ago, the writer again beheld him wandering in the crowd gathered upon the slopes of the Spur Battery at Dover, laden with loaves of bread, raised pies, and piles of sandwiches—the remnants of the luncheon of which his party had just partaken—and distributing these good things with careful impartiality amongst the ragged boys and women, of whom too many were to be seen, attending the Volunteer Review then being held. \* \* \*

“In the House of Lords, or when he is presiding over one of the grave, learned societies with which he is connected, he will lighten the most solemn occasions by some playful allusion to the notorious peculiarities of some other public man, or to his own family affairs—as when he told the members of the University of London, shortly after his charming wife had presented him with a daughter, that he now felt a personal interest in the question of education such as he had never before known. A graceful and polished speaker in his own tongue, he has a more perfect command of the French language than any other public man of our day, and the speeches which he has upon different occasions made in Paris have excited the unbounded admiration of our gallant allies.

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\* Written in 1872.

"Lord Granville's Liberalism is not easily defined. It is almost as remote from the stiff Whiggism of Lord Russell as from the ultra-Radicalism of Mr. Fawcett; and it never betrays him into the perfervid eccentricities which sometimes characterize Mr. Gladstone's political career. Perhaps it may be best described as a social creed. He is a politician of the *salon*—a disciple of Lord Palmerston, who even now copies his great master's example as closely as the changed times in which he lives will permit him to do so. He has a chivalrous sympathy with the people, and he feels that he can best express that sympathy by his adherence to the Liberal party. For a long time men looked upon his Liberalism with something akin to suspicion; and it is only within the last three years that his own party has accepted him with unreserved confidence and cordiality.

"Certainly Lord Granville has shown a great capacity for moving with the times. Who would have said, ten years ago, that Lord Palmerston's favorite peer, the 'safe' man, who was then looked upon as the future leader of an inert Whig party, would, in December, 1868, walk down the Castle Hill at Windsor arm-in-arm with Mr. John Bright, just after the latter honorable gentleman had been introduced to the Queen on his appointment as a Cabinet Minister? It says much for Lord Granville's ready acceptance in the inevitable, that he should have done this thing; and we may be sure that he did it in the most graceful and pleasing of manners." \*

Whenever the Liberal party requires a general statement which cannot, in the nature of things, be postponed easily

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 75, 76.

years—there is no one so likely to represent it in the Premiership as Earl Granville. The fact that it was offered to him in 1859, and that his statesmanlike training is now much further perfected, would give him an advantage over every competitor. Indeed, it is not now apparent who his competitors would be. “If the necessity of supplying a Liberal Premier were to arise to-morrow, it would, putting Mr. Gladstone on one side, be met by a draft on the House of Lords. Earl Granville is not a robust politician, but he is, possibly for that reason, an admirable leader of a party. During a period of great difficulty, and with official cares of an engrossing character on his hands, Earl Granville managed so to manipulate affairs in the House of Lords that only on the rarest occasions was the country reminded that the Government, of which he was the representative, there stood in a hopeless minority. Suave in manner, firm in purpose, intimate with men and things at home and abroad, schooled in diplomacy, practiced in administration, popular everywhere, an able and ready speaker, Earl Granville is a man who would unite under his leadership all save the extremest rank of the Liberal party. A Ministry formed under his auspices would be broad-based and strong, for his lordship is a man without animosities and without adversaries. He could invite whom he pleased to take office with him, and it is easy to imagine the acidities of some of his possible colleagues finding solution in the imperturbable good temper and tireless geniality of the Premier.” \*

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\* “Men and Manner in Parliament,” p. 256.



## VI.

### THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

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**T**HE great Argyll he goes before," is the line of Scotch song which comes most vividly into the mind of an American when his eye looks eagerly about the House of Lords for the Duke of Argyll. As the author of the "Reign of Law" and the father-in-law of a princess, this nobleman inspires interest, no doubt, but the harm of the whole is in the associations of Scotch song, and when he is pointed out, at last, the flavor of nationality is unmistakable. "When he strides to the table of the House of Lords, his shoulders thrown back, his head erect, his chin in the air, the skirts of his broadcloth coat he could almost fancy changed into the Campbell tartan. The bright orange-colored hair feathering up from his forehead is as the eagle plume in the highland bonnet. The free, bold gestures, are as the brandishing of the claymore. In the very ring of his strident voice there is the clang of the pibroch. It is McCallum More who is there before

us, rather than George Douglas, Duke of Argyll. The floor of the House is as his native heather, and his name and his fame are those of the Highland Chieftain of the great clan of the Campbells.\*

“‘Intensely Scotch,’” remarks another writer, “is what most men say when they see his Grace the Duke of Argyll. And it is quite true that his appearance *is* intensely Scotch. The chief of the Campbells has the slight, but erect and firmly-knit figure of a Highlander; his head is covered with the yellow hair which has so long been one of the distinguishing marks of his race, and his face has that peculiar complexion which is so seldom met with except in the inhabitants of North Britain.

“Thus in his appearance his nationality is unmistakable, and no one seeing him can doubt for a moment that he comes from the lands beyond Solway Frith. To finish this sketch of his outward man at once, it may be remarked that there is something singularly fine in the Duke’s head and face. He has a noble forehead, and the intellectual evidently predominates over the animal in his nature—if one may form a judgment upon that important point from the peculiar molding of his features. And yet there is nothing about head or face to qualify the verdict which a stranger would pronounce upon him at first sight—the verdict that he is ‘intensely Scotch.’

“And certainly no one who heard him speak would be inclined to reverse that verdict. Years of residence in London, and of constant intercourse with Englishmen, have failed to rob his tongue of the rough Doric of his

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\* “The Gladstone Government,” p. 261.

native land. He is a voluble speaker—one of the fastest in the House of Lords—yet, as you listen to him pouring out polished but vigorous sentences, you are never permitted to forget that he is a Scotchman. He is a keen politician, a man of culture, and of statesman-like instinct; but, more than anything else, he is a Scotchman.\*

"A certain pugnacity of bearing," says still another observer, "as of a very game bird, has gained the Duke of Argyll, as Indian Secretary, the macaronically punning nickname of *Cocculus Indicus*, said to have been bestowed upon him, in a moment of inspiration, by a witty bishop. There is a dispute on this point, some authorities contending that the name was given to the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Grant Duff, by a well-known member of the House of Commons. The term suits both the reputed sponsors and their political god-children so well, that by a coincident felicity it may very easily have had a double origin and application. Be this as it may, there is something decidedly gallinaceous in the Duke's demeanor. There is an air of the fighting-cock about him. To transfer the illustration from feathered to featherless bipeds, he bears, as an orator, a resemblance to a very emphatic and combative divine. He is the Boanerges of the House of Lords. He speaks in a loud and monotonous voice, like a Scotch preacher addressing a large congregation from a hill side in a high and contrary wind. He is an earnest and fluent speaker, not so much powerful as overpowering, with a close Scotch logic, a perfervid Scotch temper, and a Scotch lack of humor. His oratory resembles preaching rather

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\* "Cabinet Pictures," p. 168.

than debating ; and his attacks on the Opposition have had many a counterpart from Scotch pulpits in polemics against the Scarlet Lady." \*

As some points of resemblance between the American and the Scotch type have been pointed out by some writers, it is interesting to notice that a good American observer was struck, in 1862, with a certain quality of Americanism in the Duke of Argyll's manner. "In politics, he is a decided and consistent Liberal, and he merits the favorable consideration of all loyal Americans, from the fact that he has not failed, on every proper occasion, to advocate our cause with such arguments as to show clearly that he fully understands our position, and appreciates the importance of the principles for which we are contending. It is a curious coincidence, that his style of address bears a close resemblance to what may be called the American manner. Rapid, but distinct in utterance, facile and fluent in speech, natural and graceful in gesticulation, he might almost be transplanted to the halls of Congress at Washington without betraying his foreign birth and education."†

"The Most Noble and Right Honorable George Douglas Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll, \* \* \* \* was born on the 30th of April, 1823. The father of his Grace was John Douglas Henry Edward, seventh possessor of the Dukedom since the date of its creation, a hundred and sixty-eight years ago. That seventh Duke of Argyll, who died on the 26th of April, 1847, \* \* \* \* had in his time been thrice married.

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 275.

† "An American in the House of Lords," *Atlantic Monthly* August, 1863. [By Hon. Francis Wayland.]

Number of his first novel, "The Great Gatsby", was published in 1925. The author of the novel was F. Scott Fitzgerald. The novel was set in the 1920s in New York City. The main character was Jay Gatsby. The novel was a success and made Fitzgerald famous. He died in 1940.

The present Duke turns out to be the son of the late Duke of the same name—he has a brother, but he joined the twenty-first regiment of the line—and is succeeded on his father's death by the eldest son. The only spoken of is so far the marquis. There is a duke among them, a not very good Duke, who is Viscount three is Earl, two is Marquis, and the last of them all, the Duke.

"The oldest barony, that of Marischal, dates back to 1140; the oldest earldom, that of Argyll, to 1161. There is another barony, the barony of Lennox, dating back to 1173—but the most extraordinary position a nobleman was that of 1707, when the first of the House of Stuart, the Duke of Argyll, Marquess of Lorne and Campbell, Duke of Campbell and Dowry, Viscount Lennox and Lorne, and Baron Lorne, Mar, Marven, and Townshend, took titles then and previously considered unworthy of a noble, exclusively, however, in the peerage of Scotland. It was not until—less than a century since—on the death of Duke of Argyll was enabled to take his place in the House of Lords, the Duke of that time being created, in the peerage of Great Britain, Baron Sundridge and Humberston. As Lord Sundridge it is that the Duke of Argyll takes his seat in the hereditary branch of the Legislature."

\* "The Gladstone Government," pp. 476, 477.

"While he was yet designated, by courtesy, the Marquess of Lorne, the future Cabinet Minister married, in 1844, the Lady Elizabeth Georgiana Leveson Gower, the eldest daughter of the second Duke of Sutherland. About eight years afterward—having, in the interim, not only succeeded to his hereditary seat in the House of Lords (April 26, 1847), and there made good his claim to be regarded as a debater of considerable ability—he became, on the 28th of December, 1852, as Lord Privy Seal, a member of the Coalition Ministry, under Lord Aberdeen's Premiership. As Lord Privy Seal, until the July of 1855, he continued to sit in the Cabinet, after its reconstruction in the February of that year by Lord Palmerston as the Head of the Government. Lord Canning, however, having been appointed Governor-General of India, his Grace the Duke of Argyll, toward the close of November, was removed from the position of Lord Privy Seal to the vacated office of the Postmaster-General. Upward of two years after that he was still Postmaster-General, when, in the February of 1858, Ministers having been defeated by a majority of nineteen on Mr. Milner Gibson's motion, collectively resigned."\* From 1859 to 1866, he was again Lord Privy Seal, and was Secretary of State for India during Mr. Gladstone's last administration, 1868-74.

"It has been the great misfortune of the Duke to have been deprived of the advantages of a University education. If, like most other young men of his station, he had been trained at Oxford or Cambridge, he might have lost not a little of the ruggedness of his character. As it is, he was

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\* "The Gladstone Government," p. 260.

brought up under private tuition, and he may be said to have entered upon public life without having been called upon to measure his strength on equal terms with men around him.

“It is a terrible misfortune to any man to be born into the world as the eldest son of a Duke; to have not the silver, but the golden spoon constantly in his mouth, and to be surrounded from his birth by those who are never permitted for a single hour to forget that ‘my Lord’ the Marquis will soon be ‘his Grace’ the Duke, chief of a great family, and owner, it may be, of vast possessions. Something, however, is done to mitigate this misfortune, when the youth so placed is sent to a public school—where, surely, if nowhere else, he may learn that ‘the rank is but the guinea stamp’—and to college, where, if he like, he may meet with friends, who, though they may care a good deal for the man, will not care a straw for the Duke. These advantages, however, were denied to the Duke of Argyll. The natural consequence was, that he was trained, not as a young man, but as a young Marquis. From his earliest years he had a lively consciousness of his own importance in the social scale, and throughout his life he has never forgotten his great birth and splendid rank. Characteristically enough, when he was still a beardless boy, he indited his ‘Letter to the Peers, by a Peer’s Son,’ a singularly vapid and uninteresting performance, bristling in every line with its writer’s intense self-consciousness.

“This pride of birth, moreover, does not stand alone in the Duke’s character. It is accompanied by the yet more aggressive pride of intellect. The Duke is a very able man. If he had been but a poor Commoner he would in all prob-

ability have risen to a really important place in political life. As it is, his wits have never been sharpened by that wholesome struggle through which all self-made men must pass. Possibly it is for this very reason that he entertains so high an opinion of his own ability.

“He has unquestionably a great admiration of genius, wherever he meets it, and one of the best traits in his personal character is the manner in which he has befriended struggling talent. But if he had himself been compelled to pass through the hard struggle from obscurity to fame, he would know that, able as he is, he has no personal pretensions to the character of a genius.

“As it is, his strength has never been really tested, and he therefore not unnaturally believes it to be somewhat greater than it is. He has done a good many very clever things, has hitherto found himself quite equal for the kind of work which Prime Ministers are in the habit of intrusting to dukes, and has even earned an enviable literary reputation. Can we, therefore, feel very much surprised that he should think himself much more clever than he is, or that he should seek to impress this opinion of his powers upon the world at large?

“Apart from this pride, however, it would be hard to say much in depreciation of the Duke of Argyll. We know that he has been sneered at as ‘a Scotch pedagogue,’ and that men have once and again denounced the pedantry of his character. But we confess we think such critics are singularly wide of the mark. That he has a certain provincialism of feeling, arising from the defects of his early training, is no doubt true. This provincialism displays itself in numberless ways, and it is no doubt very irritating

to people who are not distinguished by it—or by anything else.

“The Duke’s pride would, doubtless, be of a different character were it not for this provincialism. As it is, it is not the pride of a Somerset or a Grey ; it is rather the pride of a Scotch laird, who knows that he is the greatest man in his own district ; or of a Scotch minister, who feels a not unreasonable respect for his own abilities when he compares them with those of his unlettered flock. It is, in short, a narrow, even a petty pride ; not the noble, though fatal passion which caused the fall of Lucifer. But this is his worst defect, and apart from it he has many qualities which demand our respect and our admiration.

“He has, for instance, shown throughout his life an unvarying sympathy with his own countrymen. We are told, on what is, we imagine, good authority, that he is not popular in Scotland. If this is indeed the case, then we can only say that his unpopularity is by no means deserved. Deeply impressed with the traditions of his race, the Duke remembers how his forefathers were once the representatives of their countrymen at the court of their sovereign, and how the prayers of the poor North Britons for mercy or redress were laid at the foot of the throne by the McCullum Mohr. He is apparently anxious to maintain those traditions as far as he can do so. Scotland, it is true, no longer needs a duke as her spokesman ; she has her full amount of influence in the House of Commons.

“But Scotchmen are still, as of yore, a race anxious to advance in the world—to rise above their rivals as oil rises above water. Thus it happens that the poor but ambitious Scot comes up to London by the hundred every year, bent

upon making a name and a fortune for himself. Of course it would be utterly impossible for any one man to undertake the charge of this North British contingent, and for the most part the Scotchman in London is very well able to help himself without the need of ducal patronage. But again and again the Duke of Argyll has shown his sympathy with his struggling fellow-countrymen. The Northern dialect which he himself speaks, the Northern complexion which is to be seen in his own face, and the Northern character of which he furnishes a type, are all dearer to him than anything to be seen in the South.

“One can imagine that he is passionately fond of the rugged scenery of his native land ; and it is at least beyond a question that he is passionately fond of the rugged character of his fellow-countrymen. He shows this affection for the traits which distinguish Scotchmen in many different ways. In a recent debate on the Scotch Schools’ Bill in the House of Lords, he spoke with the warmest feeling of sympathy for that representative man, the ‘dominie’ of his native land. He evidently knew the hard life which too many schoolmasters had to lead ; and was as deeply impressed with the difficulties and trials which they had to surmount as though he had been one of their number. It is too rare a thing to find this close sympathy existing between the highest rank of the peerage and the lowest rank of professional life. Who, for instance, would expect Lord Granville, or the Earl of Derby, to display not only compassion for the English parish schoolmaster, but a perfect knowledge of all his wants, and a deep personal sympathy with him in all his difficulties?

“The Duke is, moreover, distinguished by an un-

swerving consistency in his political creed. He is a Liberal of Liberals; and whilst he has nothing of the demagogue in him, he has not a few of the qualities which fit a man to be a great public leader. There is that sympathy with the struggles of the poor of which we have just spoken, and there is besides that fervid enthusiasm which has animated so many Scotch patriots. Nobody who has studied his character can doubt that he has in him the fiery resolution, and enduring courage, of which martyrs are made. Were it necessary, the Duke would go to the scaffold for his opinions as cheerfully as his great ancestor; and despite the eager nervous temperament which distinguishes him, he would, we verily believe, sleep as cheerfully as that ancestor did upon the eve of his execution.

"This is high praise, but it is not undeserved. Unfortunately, however, it must be materially qualified. Like his ancestors, the Duke's enthusiasm, though intense, is narrow. His early training hedged him round with prejudices, and though he has all his life long been struggling to break away from those prejudices, he has not always succeeded in doing so. He is still intolerant of the opinions of those who differ from him; still has that hard pragmatism which so frequently belongs to the provincial Scotchman.

"Not even his long political career and his constant intercourse with the foremost men of his day have robbed him of this trait. It is occasionally intensely irritating to hear him dealing with a great question in the House of Lords, just as it is intensely irritating to be compelled to listen to some local politician, a great man in his own

vestry, serenely laying down as indisputable his judgment upon matters which have puzzled the greatest and wisest of mankind. This it is which accounts for much of the Duke's unpopularity in political circles. For that he is unpopular it is impossible to deny. Nor is it surprising that even a duke should fail to conciliate the world, when he is not only personally proud and haughty, but when he shows at times that narrowness of opinion of which we have spoken."\*

"In one respect the Duke of Argyll differs honorably from all but a very small minority of politicians in either House. He brings to politics a mind variously cultivated and exercised in different departments of speculation and research. He has, moreover, a certain distinctness of character. He is really a personage in public life. Some of his colleagues and opponents seem little more than masks. They are officials or ex-officials, and whatever individuality they once possessed seems to have been absorbed by the functions they exercise or have exercised. 'Their nature is subdued to what they work in, like the dyer's hand,' and they scarcely admit of delicate discrimination any more than so many dyers' hands dipped in the same color would do. \* \* \* But, politically, the characters of Mr. Tweedledum and Lord Tweedledee do not allow of, or, at any rate, would not repay discrimination. They might shift offices, and even, as Dickens somewhere suggests, change minds, without anybody finding out the difference. The Duke of Argyll is far above the material which serves merely for the padding of a Cabinet. He is a man of force of character and of mind."†

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 170.      † "Political Portraits," p. 273.

“If we get in the Duke of Argyll a fair statesman of the second class—a capable man who can hold his own in a debate, who can make ministerial statements with clearness and brevity, and who can preside over a department with something more than ordinary ducal efficiency—we get a very useful article, and one which is by no means to be despised. Even in a Cabinet there must be degrees of ability. Only two or three men in any ministry reach the first rank in statesmanship, and it is no small honor to any man to hold a fair place amongst statesmen of the second rank.

“That the Duke’s place in this class is a fair one cannot be denied. As a debater, indeed, he rises very near to the first class. His speeches are almost always powerful, and they have at the same time a degree of finish which is rare amongst politicians. On the front bench of his party in the House of Lords he is, upon the whole, the most efficient debater. He has not, of course, anything of Lord Granville’s wonderful tact; on the contrary, indeed, he generally succeeds in irritating where he intends to conciliate; but, intellectually he has more power than the leader of his party in the Upper House; and, as he has a sufficient amount of courage and a ready command of words, he can hold his own very well against the best speakers of the opposition.

“He is ambitious, of course; and seems especially to aspire to fame as an orator—one of the consequences of which weakness is that he thinks it necessary to inflict upon the House, at the close of his more important speeches, perorations carefully modelled upon those of Mr. Bright. If he could but convince himself that he is not a second

Bright, he would do not a little to increase his reputation, and diminish his unpopularity. As it is, however, it must be admitted, that, when he has a business statement to make, he always makes it with clearness and succinctness—virtues which are, unfortunately, too rare.” \*

The Duke of Argyll's career of authorship began at the early age of nineteen, with the pamphlet already mentioned, “Letter to the Peers, by a Peer's Son.” This related to the celebrated Auchterarder case, which led to the disruption of the Free Church of Scotland ; and the substance of this and one or two other similar pamphlets was reproduced in a larger work, published in 1848, and styled “Presbytery Examined.” It contained a summary of the ecclesiastical annals of Scotland since the Reformation. These works attracted merely local interest, but his later scientific writings, “The Reign of Law” (1866) and “Primal Man” (1869), have been widely circulated and have passed through many editions.

“The features which have marked the Parliamentary orations of the Duke of Argyll characterize him in literature. There, too, he is essentially combative ; and he attacks the greatest chiefs of research and speculation with the same eager confidence as that which he displayed in his assaults upon Lord Derby. He goes squaring round the circle of the sciences, now aiming a blow at Mr. Darwin, now delivering a thrust at Professor Huxley or Professor Tyndall, now skirmishing with Sir Charles Lyell and Sir John Lubbock, and finally launching out against Mr. Mill. The spectacle is interesting if only as an illustration of courage.

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 177.

It is valuable, too, as giving in some degree the measure of the Duke of Argyll as a writer. He belongs to the tribe of Answerers. Every great writer has his Answerers, as the nobler animals have their predaceous parasites. The Answerer is under no necessity of framing an original conception of his subject. He is not called upon to combine the details of his knowledge into a harmonious and complete whole. He does not strike out any original track of investigation. He simply follows the order of ideas of the writer on whom he fastens, supplying what he thinks to be the necessary contradictions and correctives. He dogs closely the footsteps of the explorer, watching for those false steps which the most successful pioneer cannot avoid, and which are often the conditions of hitting at last on the true path. This work, though not of a high order, is by no means useless. The Answerer may be completely incapable of evolving a lofty scientific conception, or framing a comprehensive theory. Protracted and difficult research may be beyond him; but nevertheless he may do a very useful work in detecting a flaw of logic here, or an error of observation there; and in giving clear form to the popular conceptions, or the prevailing doctrines, with which a new theory has to contend. This service the Duke of Argyll has rendered very effectively in his 'Reign of Law,' and his 'Primæval Man.' Both books were essentially the works of an Answerer. They were parasitical books, so to speak, deriving their life and support from greater works of a higher organization; but they are creditable specimens of their sort. They belong to the order of speculation fostered by the Victoria Society, and formerly represented by treatises on the Harmony of Geology with the Mosaic Narrative.

"Here we have a feature of the Duke of Argyll's scientific and speculative writing, which somewhat diminishes its value. It seems always to be animated by an ecclesiastical and theological after-thought ; and to veil, when it does not set forth, a religious apology." \*

The Duke of Argyll has a large family of children, the eldest of whom, the Marquess of Lorne, married (March 21, 1871) the princess Louise, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria. This is said to be the first instance in English history of the marriage of a daughter of the reigning sovereign to a subject. This fact, with the independence shown by the Duke in placing one of his sons in a counting-room in New York and another in an English warehouse, has attracted unusual attention to his domestic affairs. "The Duke of Argyll has shown in social matters an independence of mind which needs only to be transferred to politics in order to enable him to do good service. Instead of acting in the spirit of Lord John Manners's immortal couplet, which it is not necessary to requote, he has perceived that if our old nobility is to live, it must not be ashamed to associate itself with laws and learning, and must court commerce, and the wealth that comes from commerce. While through one of his sons he is in alliance with royalty, through others he is or was connected with the trade of London, Liverpool, and New York. 'To my own proper shame be it spoken,' says Rob Roy in Scott's novel, 'that has a cousin wi' accounts, and yarn winnles, and looms, and shuttles, like a mere mechanical person ;' and the sentiment of Rob Roy would doubtless have been

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 276.

ed by the McCallum More of his day. That the allum More of our own day has overcome it, and has ed into the views and practice of the Baillie Nicoll e, shows a shrewdness of perception and a power of uing prejudice to common sense which ought to be e in the conduct of public affairs."\*

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 283.



## PART II.

### MR. DISRAELI'S MINISTRY.



"JOE ATLEE, chatting with Lord Kilgobbin's son Dick about 'the mighty intelligences that direct us,' observes, 'It is no exaggeration that I say if you were to be in the Home Office and I at the Foreign Office without our names being divulged, there is not a man or woman in England would be the wiser or the worse; though if either of us were to take charge of the engine on the Holyhead line there would be a smash or an explosion before we reached Rugby.' Mr. Lever knew what he was writing about, and that he has not been led away from the truth by the lure of an epigram will appear if we reflect for a moment that Mr. Gathorne Hardy has succeeded Mr. Cardwell at the War Office, Mr. Ward Hunt supersedes Mr. Goschen at the Admiralty, Lord John Manners occupies Mr. Monsell's desk at the Post Office, and, as happened after that fearful bout of cursing on the part of the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims, nobody seems one bit the worse—or the better either, for the matter of that." \*

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 105.





## VII.

### LORD CAIRNS.



**T**HE author of "Political Portraits" has pointed out that the class of lawyer-statesmen is less conspicuous in England than in America. "The condition under which law and politics are combined in England commonly sacrifices politics to law, though it ends sometimes in sacrificing law to politics. The House of Commons is generally the shortest road to Westminster Hall. Rising lawyers enter Parliament as the means of advancing themselves in their profession, and of course they are not likely to devote themselves very strenuously or very conscientiously, as for its own sake, to that which is with them but an instrument. To this fact may be attributed the habitual flexibility of lawyers as politicians, and the slight impression they usually make on public affairs in England. In the United States, on the other hand, the bar is usually the path along which ambition makes its way into the broader career of public life. The consequence is that

while the class of great lawyer-statesmen seems to be almost extinct here, it has contributed, and still contributes, the best names to American politics." \*

The most conspicuous remaining example of this class is to be found in the present Lord High Chancellor of England,—the late Conservative leader of the House of Lords. "Lord Cairns," continues the writer just quoted, "occupies a rather peculiar position in the House of Lords and in the Conservative party. He is one of two retired leaders—Lord Malmesbury being the other. Both of these gentlemen found their health unequal to the anxieties of the charge committed to them; though there were no public symptoms of wavering confidence on the part of their followers. They now with a good grace cede at least a nominal priority to the Duke of Richmond. A dethroned sovereign is seldom very heartily a loyal subject. He has usually slumbering pretensions, which may at any moment be revived; and he acquiesces rather than obeys."

Justin McCarthy, writing in 1870 an essay on "English Toryism and its Leaders," pointed out that the Tory party in England seldom had genuine Tories for leaders. "The Tories in the House of Commons, the country gentlemen of England,—the men whose ancestors came over, perhaps, with the Conqueror,—the men who imbibed family Toryism from the breasts of their mothers, are driven, when they want a capable leader, to follow a renegade Radical, the son of a middle-class Jew. In like manner the Tory Lords, also sadly needing an efficient leader, are compelled to take up with a lawyer from Belfast, the son of middle-

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 165.

class parents in the North of Ireland, who has fought his way by sheer talent and energy into the front rank of the bar, into the front bench of the Parliamentary Opposition, and at last into a peerage. Lord Caulin is a very capable man ; his sudden rise into high place and influence proves the fact of itself for he was not a young man when he entered Parliament, obscure and unknown, and he is now only in the prime of life, while he leads the Opposition in the House of Lords. He is one of the most fluent and effective debaters in either House ; he has great command of telling argument : his training at the bar gives him the faculty of making the very most, and at the shortest notice, of all the knowledge and all the facts he can bring to bear on any question. He has shown more than once that he is capable of pouring forth a powerful, almost, indeed, a passionate invective. An orator in the highest sense he certainly is not. No gleam of the poetic softens or brightens his lithe and nervous logic ; no deep feeling animates, inspires, and sanctifies it. He has made no speeches which anybody hereafter will care to read. He has made, he will make, no mark upon his age. When he dies, he wholly dies. But, living, he is a skillful and a capable man—far better qualified to be a party leader than an Erskine or a Grattan would be. A North of Ireland Presbyterian, he has made his way to a peerage, and now to be the leader of peers, with less of native genius than that which conducted Wolfe Tone, another North of Ireland Presbyterian, to rebellion and failure and a bloody death. He has, above all things, skill and discretion ; and he can lead the Tory party well, so long as no great cause has to be vindicated, no splendid phantom of a principle maintained.

His name and his antecedents are useful to us now, inasmuch as they serve still farther to illustrate the fact that Toryism is not led by Tories." \*

Sir Hugh McCalmont Cairns, now Lord Cairns, is the second son of Wm. Cairns, Esq., of Cultra, County Down, Ireland. He was born in December, 1819, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was called to the bar in 1844. In 1852 he was elected to Parliament from Belfast; in 1858 was knighted and made Solicitor-General; in 1866 was made successively Attorney-General and Lord Justice of Appeal; and on Feb. 23, 1867, was raised to the peerage as Baron Cairns of Garmoye, County Antrim, Ireland. In 1868, and again in 1874, he was constituted Lord High Chancellor of England. He married Mary Harriet, eldest daughter of John MacNeile, Esq., of Parkmount, County Antrim, and has six children.

"Lord Cairns," says the author of "Cabinet Portraits," "is allied to none of the noble families on an equality with whom he has now been placed. The blood of no great master of men in by-gone ages flows in his veins. His life has not been passed in the *salon* of the nobleman, amidst the refinements and the amenities which surround the great. He is sprung of the people—the second son of an Irish gentleman; his life has been spent in ceaseless labor—labor of a kind of which the Howards, and the Gowers, and the Cavendishes can have no knowledge, except by repute—labor first for the mere necessities of life, then for fame and for power. Not until these things had been gained—not until, by slow, laborious steps, he had

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\* "Modern Leaders," by Justin McCarthy, p. 132.

raised himself on the most difficult of all ascents, was he in a position to compete successfully with men like Lord Granville in that other kind of labor to which the highest are not strangers—labor on behalf of a party or a principle.

“Looking at the two men as they sit opposite to each other in the House of Lords this afternoon, one may see even in their personal appearance some indication of the diversity of the paths which have brought them at last to the same level of equality. Lord Granville has been already sketched in these pages. Lord Cairns, who now sits with outstretched legs, folded arms, and drooping head, is considerably taller than the leader of the Ministerialists. He has that wiry, well-knit frame, the possession of which must help any man so greatly in his struggle with the world; but that he has used his strength, spent it freely, if not prodigally, in the battle through which he has passed, is proved, if by nothing else, by the pallor of his fine intellectual countenance—a countenance clean-cut like that of a Greek statue, in repose somewhat severe of aspect, but at all times stamped with the unmistakable impress of power.

“He looks wonderfully young, this gentleman whose fortune it has been to lead the most aristocratic party in the most aristocratic assemblage in the world. Around him are gathered other peers whose ages are duly recorded in that most impertinent of books, the ‘Scarlet-bound Bible of the British Tuft-hunter.’ They are men who were born to earldoms and dukedoms, and whose lives have been spent, as it were, under shelter; but Lord Cairns looks younger than those of them who were born in the same year as himself; and that he is still in the very prime of life, and in the fullest possession of physical as well as

mental strength, is evident. And yet how different a career his has been to that of his compeers !

“When the story of his life comes to be written, it will read more like a romance than a reality ; and the young men of many a future generation might be pointed to him as the exemplar whom they must copy if they would achieve success. One can scarcely believe, looking at the quiet, reserved, ‘self-contained’, and somewhat frosty man, who sits to-day on the front Opposition bench of the House of Peers, that he can really have passed through such a struggle as that which lay between his starting-point in life, and the eminence at which he has now arrived.

“He began life at the bar, and so short a time is it since he received his first brief, that to himself it must seem but as yesterday that he was a struggling junior looking forward to the day when he should ‘take silk’ as one of the bare possibilities of a remote future. But his great talents and his unequalled industry helped him in his legal practice as they helped him in everything else ; and by the time he reached his thirtieth year, he was already well-known in those wide-spreading circles which have the woolsack as their center.

“In 1852, when he had entered upon his thirty-third year, he had gained that great step in the battle of life from which a man of genius may fight his way to almost any eminence—a seat in the House of Commons. He was returned for Belfast, and he soon made his mark in the House. A staunch Conservative, an enlightened and liberal advocate of the principles of his party, possessed of remarkable ability as a public speaker, and distinguished for the clearness and argumentative power with which he

could lay the facts of a case before an audience, he was soon marked out for preferment. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were alike able to appreciate his talents, and the post of Solicitor-General, with the honor of knighthood, was speedily conferred upon him.

“Sir Hugh Cairns fulfilled the comparatively humble duties of ‘Mr. Solicitor’ with admirable tact and power ; he became known in the House of Commons as one of the most brilliant members of a party which has had many brilliant adherents, and it was not long before he had gained such a standing in that most critical of assemblages, that the news that ‘Cairns was up’ sufficed to fill the benches in the House, and to empty the dining-room and library. But Sir Hugh had allied himself to a party whose lot it was to spend many years in the cold shade of opposition ; and for a long period his professional advancement was, in consequence, at a standstill. He gained fresh laurels at the bar ; he became yet more fully recognized in the House as one of the leaders of the Opposition ; he labored unweariedly both in his profession and in Parliament, but he had to see the highest honors which a ministry could bestow enjoyed by men whose inferiority to himself they themselves would have been the last to dispute, whilst no reward but the approval of his own conscience followed his political exertions.

“The turn of the wheel came at length, however, and in 1866 Hugh McCalmont Cairns followed his party across the floor of the House, and became Attorney-General to the Derby Administration. But this was not the highest reward which the leader whom he had served so faithfully had in store for him.

"In October of the same year he quitted the House of Commons, amidst the regrets of men of all parties, and accepted the easy and dignified post of a Lord Justice of Appeal. Very soon the Ministry found reason to regret that his brilliant talents were thus lost to his party, and in 1867, the man who had been a struggling stuff-gownsmen fifteen years before, was raised to the peerage. In the following year, when Mr. Disraeli succeeded Lord Derby in the Premiership, he did not forget the faithful friend who had for so many years been his constant ally on the front Opposition bench of the Lower House. Almost his first act upon receiving the commands of her Majesty to form an administration, was to place the Great Seal at the disposal of Lord Cairns, who thus, at the age of forty-nine, and in spite of the adverse influences surrounding him in consequence of his political creed, attained the highest honor of his profession, and inscribed his name in the long list of those great lawyers who have occupied the woolsack.

"To most men who have fought their way up to this eminence, the Lord Chancellorship is a point at which they are content to rest and be thankful. They can go no further ; they have reached the highest stone of the legal pyramid ; and though some of them may be inclined, like Alexander, to weep over the fact that there are no fresh legal worlds to conquer, or may even, like Lord Brougham, meditate a new career in another country, they are for the most part satisfied with the result of labors, the extent of which is known only to themselves, and settle down quietly to the enjoyment of a peerage and a pension. But in the case of Lord Cairns his tenure of the woolsack

would seem only to have been a fresh starting-point in his career.

“As Lord Chancellor he not only fulfilled his professional duties to the satisfaction of the legal world, but took an active part in the politics of the day. It was not, however, until the close of the session of 1868, when, exhausted with the labors of his double duties as President of the House of Lords and a Chancery Judge, that Lord Cairns made the great speech which marked him out for still higher party preference than any which he had yet received. The speech was that upon the Irish Church Suspensory Bill, which had come up from the lower chamber. Never will those who witnessed the brilliant scene presented by the House of Peers on that memorable night forget it. Our hereditary legislators had mustered in stronger force than upon almost any previous occasion within the recollection of living men; the galleries were crowded by the peeresses, dazzling in their beauty and their jewels; the most notable men in the House of Commons were huddled together at the bar, or on the steps of the throne; whilst at the side of the woolsack stood the Lord Chancellor, pale and emaciated, evidently very ill, but possessed by a spirit which no physical infirmities could overcome, and pouring forth for hours an unbroken stream of clear and logical eloquence against the measure before the House. Every one in the crowded chamber listened spell-bound. Men who had known Hugh Cairns for a score of years were lost in admiration at the power which he had now developed, and which so far surpassed all their previous experience of him; cheer upon cheer rolled from the ministerial benches at the close of each glowing period,

and when the end was reached, and the Lord Chancellor resumed his seat upon the woolsack, the applause came from both sides of the House, whilst the very ladies rose in their enthusiasm and joined in the general approbation by the waving of fans and handkerchiefs.

“It was a great and almost unexampled success, and its effect upon the life of Lord Cairns has not yet ceased. Mr. Disraeli, as all the world knows, left office in the following December, and when Parliament met in February, 1869, it was announced that the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Peers had been assumed by the ex-Lord Chancellor. No one who is not intimately acquainted with the inner spirit of English social life can appreciate the full extent of the honor which was thus bestowed upon Lord Cairns. For centuries it has been one of the traditions of our aristocracy that they should be led in their own chamber only by one of themselves, by a man whose fathers had for a dozen generations been amongst our born law-givers, and who was himself allied to the leading members of both parties in the House. Lord Cairns, of course, had no pretensions of this kind. It was but seventeen years since he was elected for Belfast, and entered the popular chamber as an obscure Commoner. Only seventeen years ! And in that time he had passed through the successive stages of legal honor until he had reached the highest ; had obtained a coronet, and had the leadership of his party in the most aristocratic assemblage in the world bestowed upon him by acclamation !”\*

Lord Cairns “is a man of keen and sharp intellect, of

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 86.

quick perceptions, and of definite convictions. His language is clear and precise, and even grammatical—the last a peculiarity which distinguishes him from almost all the Parliamentary orators of his day. But he has one fatal defect. To use a phrase of the actors, he is without the sentiment of his part. He does not look the leader of one of the great aristocratic parties—of the great aristocratic party—of England ; and he has always apparently been conscious of this. In the tones of his voice, in manner, bearing, dress even, Lord Cairns always seems slightly out of place between Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Richmond. \* \* \*

“ Lord Cairns’s manner in the House of Lords resembles that of the trusted professional adviser of a great family at my lord’s breakfast or dinner table, or out shooting with him in the coverts. There is every disposition to treat him as of the same set ; he has every disposition to be so treated. There is no offensive patronage on the one side ; no unworthy flattery or obsequiousness on the other ; still there is a consciousness of difference and incompatibility. A line, merely imaginary, it may be, as devoid of breadth as the line of mathematics, but as long as their intercourse, seems to separate the two men as completely as if it were a gulf. The one cannot step out of the magic circle which hems him in ; the other cannot step within the circumference which keeps him out. Mr. Mortimer Gazebee, the family solicitor, may marry Lady Amelia de Courcy ; but though the streams may flow, like the Rhone and the Arve, in the same channel, they keep their distinctness after the junction, and it is long before they really blend. Politically, Lord Cairns’s position has been some-

thing like this. Even when he was nominally leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords he always spoke as if he were rather its professional adviser and trusted agent than its chief or head. There is no reason to suppose that his mercantile origin and professional career at all interfered with his success as a leader, except as they affected his own habits of mind, character, and feeling. The Tory peers would no doubt have loyally and frankly accepted Lord Cairns, if Lord Cairns could have loyally and frankly accepted himself. They would have had no misgivings if he had had none. Though a gentleman of the middle class to begin with, he is as good a gentleman by birth, education, and character as any of them. But the brisk professional manner, the knowing look, the very attitude and gestures with which he pulls himself together to make a smart reply, as from a clever agent to a grumbling tenant or a troublesome mortgagee, have probably disagreeable associations for the majority of the peers, in addition to their æsthetic objections on grounds of taste and style. It is not surprising, therefore, that so long as Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby stand aloof from the leadership of the party, the Conservative peers, in spite of the waste of time involved, should prefer an arrangement which allows the Duke of Richmond to blunder out their unaffected sentiments and his, and permits Lord Cairns later in the evening to explain to his friends, to his opponents, and to the Duke himself, what the Duke really means. Their relation to each other resembles that of the wooden old sergeant and his clearer-minded and more articulately-speaking wife in one of Dickens' novels. 'Lord Cairns is correct in his way of giving my opinions

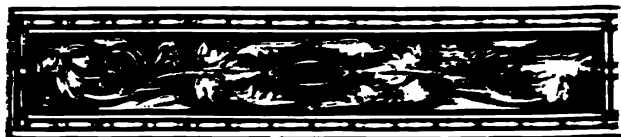
—hear me out,' is the admonition which the Duke of Richmond seems sometimes to be mentally addressing to both sides of the House, as he listens, with some curiosity but more complacency, to the minute and lengthened expositions of his noble and learned friend.

“Lord Cairns had attained the first place at the equity bar, or at least he divided the first place with Lord Selborne, before his elevation to the highest judicial post in the kingdom. In the Lords, as formerly in the Commons, he is essential to his party in debate. What he has to say is enforced by the credit derived from an unblemished personal character, and by a Parliamentary career as straightforward as is compatible with the windings and doublings of Conservative policy, and as consistent as the political self-contradictions of his chiefs would allow. Add the training and habits of an English equity lawyer to the essentially Scotch character of an Irishman of Ulster—for there is nothing Irish in Lord Cairns except the habit of substituting in speech the diphthong *oi* for the vowel *i*—and the two main constituents of Lord Cairns's political composition are brought together. Cold, clear, shrewd, and disputatious, prone now to reduce great issues to small verbal quibbles, and now to see portentous consequences in minute verbal distinctions—a tendency not without its uses, though as a prevailing habit the mark of a somewhat petty order of mind—Lord Cairns lacks the largeness of view and the grasp of principle which are necessary to transform the political lawyer, or the lawyer-like politician, into the statesman. His eloquence partakes, of course, of the character of his mind. It is frozen oratory. It flows like water from a glacier; or, rather,

it does not flow at all ; for though Lord Cairns never hesitates or recalls a phrase, he can scarcely be called in the proper sense a fluent speaker. His words rather drop with monotonous and inexorable precision than run on in a continuous stream. The several stages of his speech are like steps cut out in ice, as sharply defined, as smooth and as cold. Into all the subjects with which he deals he brings the habits of mind and methods of argument proper to the Chancery barrister." \*

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 175-,80.



## VII.

### THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.

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**T**HOUGH it has taken a long time to do so, the Duke of Richmond is at last being recognized as the leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Lords. His political biography has very recently been written. The Duke's personal modesty and the force of circumstances have combined to prevent his taking so active a part in politics as he might otherwise have been the case, and in the present world he is comparatively at hand and at home.

Nevertheless, no one who knows much of the real life of politics can doubt that the Conservatives were wise when they called upon the Duke of Richmond a few years ago, to take the leadership vacated by Lord Cairns. It is quite true that the Duke does not possess and does not pretend to possess those higher qualities of statesmanship which distinguish Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby; and it is equally true that he is not, like Lord Cairns, blessed with the faculty of thinking upon ones

legs, which is so great an advantage to a party leader. Nevertheless, he has many admirable qualities which tend to fit him for the post which he has now assumed, and, without venturing upon invidious comparisons with other distinguished men who sit beside him upon the front Opposition bench in the House of Lords, we cannot hesitate to acknowledge that he was the best man available to his party for the leadership.

“There are many able men seated near him, but upon the whole there are none—always making the exceptions we have already named—who have the requisite qualifications of a leader to so large an extent as the Duke of Richmond. More than once in the course of these papers we have had to point out what are the qualifications required in a party leader. Tact and temper are perhaps the most important. Clearness of statement is another hardly less so; facility of speech is equally valuable. But over and above all these there must be the power of discerning the weak point in the enemy's harness, and of so directing the arrows of the Opposition that they may strike between the joints of the armor. No doubt this last qualification is a very unamiable one; but in plain words it means simply the power to detect the vulnerable points about the foe, and to strike sharp and strong at those points. Unamiable as this quality may seem to be, however, it is a very essential one; if our party leaders did not possess it they would soon convert a well-organized army into a rabble, or they would give to the party which was in the ascendant for the time a complete immunity from the fear of hostile criticism.

“It is because the Duke of Richmond is well supplied with these varied qualifications that we venture to antici-

pate for him a successful career as leader of the Conservative peers. He is not a statesman of the first rank, but he has that which is next to the highest statesmanship, tact. He can see which course abounds with shoals and quicksands, and which affords room for fair and successful sailing. It would be flattery to say that he could of his own wit devise a policy for a great party, but give him a policy to carry out and he will show a quick appreciation at once of the strength and the weakness of that policy, and will bring it to a successful end with greater ease than some men of deeper thought would display under similar circumstances.

“He cannot profess to compete with Lord Granville in the possession of that exquisite urbanity which makes the Foreign Secretary the ideal representative of ‘sweetness and light’ in the Cabinet, but the Duke of Richmond is nevertheless blessed with an eminently happy temper. He has not, for instance, the crotchety irritableness of Lord Russell or the Celtic impetuosity of the Duke of Argyll. He can present an unruffled front to the enemy even in the heat of an angry debate, and he can prove at all times that he is not blind to the excellencies of the party to which he is opposed.

“It is wonderful to observe how great an influence a little exhibition of an ability to appreciate the good qualities of opponents has in soothing the asperities of debate. There are men in the House of Commons at this moment whose popularity is remarkable, and who enjoy a reputation for statesmanlike ability which it is certain cannot be based upon any actual achievements. When the character of these men is inquired into, the only manner in which it

is possible to account for the position they occupy is by ascribing it to their fairness toward those to whom they are opposed.

“The Duke of Richmond, therefore, having frequently shown that, even when differing most widely from those who sit on the opposite side of the House, he can yet recognize and appreciate their good qualities, possesses one of the most valuable of the qualifications which the party leader ought to have. Clearness of statement again is not the least important qualification of a party leader, and here those who have heard the brief and business-like speeches of the Duke of Richmond cannot question that he possesses this qualification to a large extent. There have been cases quite recently of statesmen who, though admirably adapted in all other respects to lead a party, have nevertheless failed utterly in the attempt to do so, simply because they had not that command of words which is necessary to make a statement in such a manner that it may be understood by those to whom it is addressed.” \* \* \* \*

“Under the Parliamentary system, the tongue is almost as essential as the brain ; and where complete command over the former is not possessed, a superabundant supply of the latter cannot make up for the deficiency. The Duke of Richmond, however, is a clear, concise, and effective speaker. With no pretensions to the reputation of an orator, he can say what he wants to say in language which everybody will understand, and he has not unfrequently made speeches which have been both valuable in themselves, and powerful influences upon the course of a great debate. \* \* \* \*

“We do not pretend, of course, that the Duke of Rich-

mond is equal in this respect to either of the leaders in the House of Commons, but he is nevertheless a ready speaker—he does not need to prepare his shots with laborious care in his study before he fires them, and that is, after all, the main thing. All that is wanted of him as leader is that he should be able not only to express his thoughts clearly, but to do so without any longer preparation, any more complete arrangement of his ideas, than that which he can have in the heat of a debate, or whilst the opponent to whom he is to reply is yet speaking.

“Of the Duke’s politics we need not say much. He is a most consistent member of the Conservative party ; being perhaps as much a Conservative of the modern school as any Duke can be expected to be. He would not be likely to adhere to a form which had no longer any meaning or vitality ; nor is he one who will advocate any policy merely because it is the policy of which a majority of his party approves. Indeed, on this point he gave clear proof of his independence in 1869, when he severed for a time his connection with the Conservative leaders, because he found himself unable to act with them upon the question of the Irish Church. Independence in forming opinions, and courage in expressing them, are not to be denied to the man who could do this under such circumstances as those which then prevailed.

“The Duke occupied a seat in the House of Commons for nearly twenty years, thus gaining an admirable political training ; he has been President of the Poor Law Board and the Board of Trade, in which capacities he acquitted himself with marked success.”\*

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” pp. 210, 213, 215.”

His Grace, Charles Henry Gordon-Lennox, sixth Duke of Richmond, is the son of the fifth Duke; his mother being Caroline, daughter of the Marquis of Anglesey. He inherits his ancestral honors, such as they are, from the first Duke, who was the illegitimate son of Charles II. by the Duchess of Portsmouth. The present Duke was born February 27, 1818; was educated at Christ Church, Oxford; became a captain in the army in 1844, and was aide-de-camp successively to the Duke of Wellington, and to Viscount Hardinge. He was President of the Board of Trade in 1857-8, and was appointed President of the Poor Law Board and sworn a Privy Councilor in 1859. He represented West Sussex in Parliament as a Conservative from 1841, till October 21, 1860, when he succeeded to his father's rank and title. Since February 26, 1870, he has been the recognized leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords, and he is now President of the Council. He married, November 28, 1843, Frances Harriet, daughter of Algernon Frederick Greville, Esq., and has six children.

"If it were not for the good faith and zeal of his allies," says the critic of the *Daily News*, "the Duke of Richmond's leadership would be about as comfortable as Henry VI.'s Monarchy, disputed by pretenders, and swayed hither and thither by turbulent barons. Not only do Lord Cairns and Lord Malmesbury warn him of the transitoriness of all human greatness, and offer a service rather of grace than of allegiance; but Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby still more vividly remind him that the etymology *dux à non ducendo* is as plausible as that of *lucus à non lucendo*. In fact, there are at least five Richmonds in the field of the House of Lords; and the

actual Richmond is, with one exception, the least formidable of them all. As a debater, and in force of character and intellect, he is, perhaps, superior to Lord Malmesbury ; and that, whatever it may amount to, is the most that can be said for him."



## IX.

### THE EARL OF DERBY.

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**W**HEN an American takes his first look at the English House of Lords, he has a vague expectation of finding himself in the presence of men of peculiarly high-bred aspect. I remember an American lady who came away delighted because she had seen one such man in the lobby, but he turned out to be Mr. Russell Sturgis, her own fellow-countryman. In general, so decisively are such expectations disappointed that one is apt to go to the other extreme and to remark, with the author of "Ginx's Baby" — "Why noble earls should be so ugly, is a problem in nature." Yet there is a high-bred style of ugliness, which would not so surprise us, in such an assemblage, as does the essentially *bourgeois* look that marks some of the best-known noblemen. The late Lord Althorp is said to have remarked, in regard to himself, "Nature intended me for a grazier, but men insist upon making me a statesman." In his case this was merely an assertion of simple

and rural tastes ; but something of this impression is really made by the personal appearance of Lord Derby. To an American, in whose mind this earldom is associated with the Battle of Bosworth Field, with two centuries of almost independent sovereignty in the Isle of Man, with the heroic defense of Latham House, and with Scott's "Peveril of the Peak," the impression is a disappointment. If a man in this generation insists on being Earl of Derby, he owes it to Republican visitors, at least, that he should wear a presence worthy of the name. If the imposing spectacle is to be kept up, let the performer besit the part.

This fact is plainly recognized by the keen critic of the *Daily News*, who thus contrasts the present Lord Derby with his brilliant father, whom Bulwer called "the Rupert of debate :"

"The late Lord Derby was probably the last specimen—there has been none certainly since him—of the purely aristocratic statesman. His temper and prejudices were no doubt common to him with many of his party ; but only in his case were they associated with the genius and force of character which made them conspicuous. There was something knightly in his bearing and tone, which carried him through transactions other than chivalrous without forfeiting his title to that favorite epithet. The present Lord Derby represents the transition of the English aristocracy into a plutocracy, or rather its merging into the plutocracy which has grown up around it, and added immensely to its wealth. The looms of Manchester and the docks of Liverpool, which have doubled the rent-roll of Knowsley, seem to have had some moral influence on its present lord. There is a nameless air of the count-

ing-house and of the City about him. It is no doubt these qualities which have attracted to him the confidence of such men as Mr. Samuel Laing. His Toryism is *bourgeois*, as unlike that of Mr. Disraeli as can possibly be. Indeed, the friendship of these two eminent men is a singular instance that dissimilar characters are reciprocally more attractive than those which resemble each other. Mr. Disraeli's dedication of the expurgated "Revolutionary Epick" to Lord Derby is a curious monument of a curious friendship. As cold natures seek the fire, so level and sober characters seem to find a charm in the escapades and caprices of more impulsive and whimsical tempers. \* \* \*

"Lord Derby has, in all probability, many years of public life before him, which are sure to be respectable and useful; but which do not promise a really great, still less a brilliant, career. There is the half of a true statesman in him, but, for lack of the other half, it is likely to be comparatively unproductive. A malign fortune has distributed over two generations and heads of the House of Stanley the qualities which, if they had been concentrated in one, would have given, perhaps, its greatest statesman since Chatham to England. If the present Lord Derby had the imagination, the impulse, and the eager combative spirit of his father; or if the father had had the knowledge, the candor, and the sober judgment of his son, all rivalry would have been driven out of the field. As it is, each has lacked more completely than is usual the special gifts of the other, and the physical dissimilarity which was apparent through the strange family resemblance of voice and feature illustrated this mental and moral contrast. If we were to apply the doctrine and language of the older

hology, which distinguished three souls in the same nization—an animal, a rational, and a spiritual soul—might say that the present Lord Derby differs from his predecessor by the lack of the higher or more spiritual

The ethereal fire seems to be withdrawn ; and the nature is heavier with a grosser clay. He is his with all the 'go' taken out of him, and a good deal solid stuff put into him. Instead of the Rupert of de- whose ringing and flashing words seemed almost to ipate his thoughts, so that the orator did not know he was going to say until he was 'going' to say it no and had actually said it, and whose own voice seemed convey his meaning to him and to his hearers simultaneously, we have a speaker who never trusts himself with- paper, who is incapable apparently of uttering half a a continuous sentences unless they are before him in d text or in clear print, whose Ministerial answers to tions were always more or less furtively read, and e longer speeches are essays as carefully prepared as ey were intended for the *Quarterly Review* instead of ie House of Lords or the platform. The late Lord y plunged into debate, eager to 'drink delight of : with his Peers,' careless of the blows he received, thinking only of the strokes he gave. The present Derby is almost a non-combatant even in the very of the fight, in which he makes his appearance like ald with a proclamation."\*

The position Lord Derby holds in the State affords an nce, extremely rare, of an English politician whose

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 96, 99.

reputation has been made by panegyrics in newspapers and in the absence of any foundation adequate to the superstructure. A long time ago, whilst the earl was still Lord Stanley, he made a speech somewhere which some leading newspaper eulogized as containing 'a common-sense view of the question.' On a subsequent occasion his Lordship delivered another address on a different subject at a new place, and three newspapers simultaneously published leading articles, in which it was remarked that 'Lord Stanley had taken a common-sense view of the question.' Since that period the ball thus set rolling has gathered impetus and bulk, till to-day the morning after the delivery of any speech by the Earl of Derby is certain to be journalistically marked with a score of white chalks pointing out that here at last we have 'the common-sense view of the question.' To say that the earth is round when it is open to a man to allege that it is flat, is obviously to take a common-sense view of the question. But there is nothing very new or helpful in the assertion, and much of Lord Derby's public utterance is not beyond the charge of being akin to this sort of 'common sense.' It will be remembered what an ecstasy of delight we were all thrown into only a few months ago when his Lordship, addressing a Young Men's Association in Lancashire, told the enthralled audience to read good books, to be industrious, to be moral, and to take care of their health. Here truly was 'the common-sense view of the question' of life, and though upon analysis we seem to have heard or read it all before, we are none the less conscious of the Earl of Derby's claim upon our admiration, or less profuse in our applause of his sterling qualities. It may be that Lord Derby is a

plain sort of man, of phlegmatical temperament, gifted with a full average measure of intelligence, which he has cultivated with much industry, and which he applies to the passing events of the day with fairly successful issues."\*

Edward Henry Smith Stanley, fifteenth Earl of Derby, is the eldest son of the fourteenth Earl, his mother being the Honorable Emma Caroline Wilbraham, daughter of Edward, Lord Skelmersdale. The elder Lord Derby was well known in America, both as a statesman and as an author, his translation of Homer having been reprinted in the United States. The present Earl was born at Knowsley Park, July 21, 1826; was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; failed to be chosen to Parliament for Lancashire, in March, 1848; made a tour through the United States, Canada, and the West Indies, and was returned to Parliament for Lyme Regis during his absence. He made his first speech in 1850, on the condition of the sugar colonies. During his absence in India, in 1852, he was appointed Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in his father's first administration; in 1853, he submitted a plan for the Reform of Indian Administration, and the essential features of this scheme were adopted in 1858. In 1855, he declined a position in the Cabinet under Lord Palmerston; in 1858, he became Secretary for the Colonies, in his father's second Cabinet, and afterwards President of the Board of Control, with the title of Her Majesty's Commissioner for the affairs of India. The transfer of the management of East Indian af-

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 263.

fairs from the East India Company to the officers of the Crown took place under his direction, and he became first Secretary of State for India. In his father's third Cabinet, he held the position of Foreign Secretary, holding that office from 1866 until the accession of Mr. Gladstone to the Premiership in 1868. In October, 1869, he entered the House of Lords, on the death of his father; and in February, 1874, resumed the Foreign Office under Mr. Disraeli. He was married in 1870, to the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury, but has no children.

"It is no easy task," says Wemyss Reid, "to decide the position which Lord Derby holds in the political world. He is a Conservative, and he has proved his fidelity to his party at a heavy cost to himself; but he enjoys almost as much of the respect and esteem of Liberals as of Conservatives, and on three successive occasions he has been asked to take high office under a Whig Premier. He stands alone therefore, a party-man and yet not a party-man. \* \* \* \*

"But as Lord Derby—who is, after all, better able to form an opinion on the point than anybody else—tells us that he is a Conservative, and as the whole tenor of his life bears out that assertion, we see no reason for doubting where to place him. The Liberals have often claimed him as one of themselves; but they have yet to make out a case in support of their claim which will be really conclusive.

"Whilst, in one respect, however, he is a party man, there is a sense in which it may be said that he belongs to no party. He has never given up to party talents meant

for mankind ; he has never allowed those party prejudices and passions, to which almost all men are liable, to blind his vision or to warp his judgment ; he has never, we believe, made a speech in or out of the House of Commons, which was *only* a party speech, and that is more than can be said of any other living politician.

“Something, no doubt, of his peculiar position in the political world, is due to his temperament. No one who has seen Lord Derby, or heard him speak, would be likely to fall into the error of conceiving that, under any circumstances, he could be swayed by violent passions.

“His temperament is phlegmatic to a degree very rare in England ; in his mode of speech—the slow, deliberate utterance of carefully-weighed words—he shows that he possesses above all things the judicial mind ; and in the passionless but (at the same time) dignified manner which constantly distinguishes him, he proves that he is above the reach of the lighter emotions which have so much influence upon the minds of more ordinary men. It makes no matter upon what subject he is speaking ; it may be one of the most abstract description, or it may be a question upon which the fate of a government depends ; he always deals with it in such a manner as to give you the idea of a judge pronouncing a decision, rather than of a Cabinet Minister making a speech in Parliament. He might almost be described as the moderator of that distinguished assembly. \* \* \*

“It was a happy lot which made him when in office the recognized head of a department in which above all other things this passionless, judicial tone of mind is required. In the ordinary work of politics too much of this element

is a misfortune. England is ruled by party government, and were a man to be the representative of the Government in a department in which strictly party questions were constantly being raised, he would sooner or later inevitably come to grief if he were to weigh every question judicially, and to shut out of his view altogether the requirements of party which, in this country, are often the requirements of the nation also.

"But there is one department of the State into which no such considerations can fairly be said to enter, but in which, as a rule, the English people trust a minister, not because he is a Liberal or a Conservative, but because he is an Englishman. And this is the department which has been allotted to Lord Derby. How admirably he has conducted the foreign affairs of the country there is no need for us to tell. By common consent he has been placed first among the foreign ministers of the day. The absence alike of passion and of prejudice from the character is just what is needed by an honorable diplomatist. The man who has to conduct the dealings of a country with neighboring States, should, above all other things, be able to comprehend the views taken by those with whom he has to deal, as well as the views of those for whom he is acting. He must, especially in the case of an English foreign minister, be able at all times to see his own country, with its failings and weaknesses, as others see it. We believe there is no English statesman who can do this so well as Lord Derby.

"The day of a blustering foreign policy has gone by. It died out when Lord Palmerston gave up the seals of the Foreign Office, and it is never likely to be revived. Still

more remote is the day of a Machiavellian foreign policy. We cannot hope, at any rate for some time to come, to attain the post-prandial frankness of the diplomacy which Mr. Reverdy Johnson tried to inaugurate; but we will never consent to return to the old days of double-dealing, bribery, and corruption, in which the cleverest knave was invariably the winner. We have begun to have some dim preception of the fact that nations must deal together upon the same principles as individuals, and that in each case mutual honor, honesty, and courtesy, are the chief requisites. But as yet we are not free from the influence of the old traditions and the old prejudices, nor have we learnt to recognize the altered status of England amongst the nations of the world.

“We need, therefore, a foreign minister, who, in this respect, is ahead of us, or rather above us; one who can take a line of action not because it is the line which his predecessors took before him, or that which is most popular with the country, but because a careful, and as far as possible, an impartial consideration of the question, convinces him that this and this only is the right line to take. Here, then, comes the need for the judicial frame of mind, and here it is that Lord Derby's qualities are specially valuable. \* \* \*

“The calm and dignified demeanor which distinguishes Lord Derby is an additional qualification on his part for the Foreign Secretaryship. It is especially the demeanor which should characterize England so long as she adheres to the policy of non-intervention; and the contrast which it presents to the mischievous fussiness of Lord Russell is as happy as it is marked. There was, we believe, no Eng-

lishman of any party, who did not feel thankful when the foreign affairs of the country were in the hand of Lord Stanley, or who did not regret deeply his removal from the department which he had made specially his own.

"Lord Granville and he may be said to run together as the alternate chiefs of the Foreign Office. The former has more of the *summus in modo*, the diplomatic finish and politeness, than the latter; but it is somewhat singular, that whilst amongst Conservatives no Liberal is more popular than Lord Granville, amongst Liberals there is no Conservative who enjoys their esteem in so high a degree as Lord Derby. \* \* \*

"Of the many admirable traits of his private character, of the philanthropy which so constantly distinguishes him and which has displayed itself in so many ways, of his high appreciation of modern culture, and his intense respect for all intellectual pursuits—a respect by no means common amongst practical politicians—we have left little space in which to speak. These things show, however, that his mind is not absorbed in statecraft, but that he takes a very lively and a very kindly interest in the smaller affairs of the world. There is no social movement which has right and reason on its side, that need look to Lord Derby for aid in vain." \*

"Probably no one was ever freer from personal or class prejudice than he. At Cambridge, and afterward in the House of Commons, Lord Derby sought always the society less of the men of his own set than of the men of any set from whom he could learn something. He was intimate,

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," pp. 29-37.

and maintained his intimacy, with the best minds of his University ; and in Parliament nobody of his political rank talked so freely and indiscriminately with men of every variety of social and political belonging. This conscientious desire to inform himself on all sides of opinion, and to look at a question through everybody's eyes in order to help his own vision, need only a more vivid imagination and a quicker sympathy, to produce more considerable results than have followed from it. All that he could assimilate he has taken up ; all that he could see he has fairly allowed to count for what it was worth in the formation of his opinions. But he seems to lack faculty for the higher constructive statesmanship. The materials are there, but there is no master-builder. The altar and sacrifice are ready, but the flame does not descend. Lord Derby has little comprehension either of political speculation of the larger order, or of political feeling of the deeper kind. The former he regards as visionary notions, the latter as sentimental weakness. This constitutes him a 'safe' man in the eyes of many—that is to say, he is a safe statesman when no danger threatens. In times when original conceptions and the power imaginatively to realize and embody popular feelings are needed, he would be one of the most dangerous of guides. There is no adviser so perilous as one who applies ordinary rules to extraordinary occasions, and this is Lord Derby's habitual attitude in politics." \*

Justin McCarthy admits that there was a time when he believed that Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, had in him the material for a statesman.

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 101.

"I confess that at one time I looked to him with great hope, as a man likely to develop into statesmanship of the highest order, and to announce himself as a votary of political and intellectual progress. Some years ago I wrote an article in the *Westminster Review*, the object of which was to point to Lord Stanley as the future colleague of Gladstone in a great and a really liberal government. I have changed my opinion since. Lord Stanley wants, not the brains, but the heart for such a place. He has not the spirit to step out of his hereditary way. He is one of the sort of men of whom Goethe used to say, 'If only they would commit an extravagance even, I should have some hope for them.' He seems to care for little beyond accuracy of judgment and propriety; and I do not suppose accuracy of judgment and propriety ever made a great statesman. There is nothing venturesome about Lord Stanley—therefore there is nothing great. A man to be great must brave being ridiculous; and I do not remember that Lord Stanley has ever run the risk of being ridiculous. \* \* \* \*

"In England he has received immense praise for the part he took in averting a war between France and Prussia on the Luxembourg question. \* \* \* The one original thing which Lord Stanley did during the controversy was to write a dispatch to Prussia, recommending her to come to terms, because of the superior navy of France and the certainty, in the event of war, that France would have the best of it at sea. Now, this was a capital argument to influence a man like Lord Stanley himself—calm, cold-blooded, utterly rational. But human ingenuity could hardly have devised an appeal less likely

to influence Prussia in the way of peace. Prussia, flushed with her splendid victories over Austria, and deeply offended by the arrogant and dictatorial conduct of France, was much more likely to be stung by such an argument, if it affected her at all, into flinging down the gauntlet at once, and inviting France to come if she dared. The use of such a mode of persuasion is, indeed, an adequate illustration of the whole character of Lord Stanley. Cool, prudent, and rational, he is capable enough of weighing things fairly when they are presented to him; but he can neither create an opportunity nor run a risk. Therefore, he remains officially a Tory, mentally a Liberal, politically neither the one nor the other. His bones are marrowless, his blood is cold. He can forfeit his own career, and hazard his reputation for his party; but that is all. He cannot give his mind to it, and he cannot redeem himself from his futile bondage to it. He is a respectable speaker, despite his defective articulation and his lifeless manner; he will be a respectable politician, despite his want of faith in or zeal for the cause he tries to follow. That is his career; that is the doom to which he voluntarily condemns himself.\*

“Lord Derby is frequently spoken of as the destined First Minister of England when the time shall come for the withdrawal of the present leaders from office and public life. He would not, however, be the natural chief of a party of action, because he has no impulses to push him forward; nor of a party of reaction, for he has

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\* “Modern Leaders, by Justin McCarthy,” pp. 133, 134.

no prejudices to drive him backward. He might with more propriety be the head of a stationary party in a period of stagnation. But this Third or Neutral party, so often invoked, is an impossibility; for it would be crushed, as between the upper and nether millstones, by the other two parties. It is not a necessity; for either of the two parties is ready to supply the void when a Laodicean policy is wanted. It is curious to observe, and it would be uncandid to conceal the fact, that, with the exception of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, the most ardent Radicals, and the most forward of Advanced Reformers, had no scruple in serving under the Administration, which the Tories assert to have been Conservative in disguise, of Lord Palmerston. A Third Party is not necessary, therefore, to a neutral policy of rest and thankfulness; nor is it necessary to Lord Derby's future Premiership. His very indifference to party makes him good-naturedly tolerant of its exigencies, and ready to adapt himself to them with a facility which has not improved his reputation. The line which he took in the Reform Bill intrigues of 1866 and 1867, and on the Irish Church question in 1868, proves that a man need not be a strong partisan in order to discharge successfully the work of factious manœuvre. It may be questioned, however, whether Lord Derby has the attractive and commanding personal qualities necessary in a Parliamentary leader; and his conspicuous want of readiness and resource in debate is almost an insuperable obstacle to his holding such a position in a nation governed, as Mr. Carlyle says England is, by talk. He is better fitted to be a perpetual President of a Social Science Association, or the Chairman

in reserve of any and every Commission of Inquiry which any Government may choose to appoint. If he had not been the Earl of Derby, he would have been admirably placed as the chief permanent official in some of the great departments of State. He would keep a complicated mechanism in excellent working trim, would readjust it when it got slightly out of gear, and would be a check against the bold innovations of a too eager or impetuous chief. His administration of the different offices he has held has been of this orderly, respectable, and unexciting character. His foreign policy was sensible and tame. He tried arbitration with America, but the effort broke down in the Senate at Washington. He framed a Luxembourg treaty, which tied only a slip knot. He is scarcely one of those statesmen of whom it is possible to expect greater things than he has yet accomplished. There is no sign of undeveloped qualities in his mind. At five-and-twenty he was what he is now. A balanced mind and character in a young man are generally the signs of narrow limits; for growth is usually successive in the several parts of mind as of body—first this limb or faculty, then that—and is marked by disproportion and a certain ungainliness until the full stature and the final proportion are reached. There is nothing of this sort in Lord Derby. All was balanced from the first, and there is no promise of anything very great at the last. He has ordinary gifts in an extraordinary degree. In a more complimentary sense than that in which Mr. Disraeli applies the phrase to a much inferior man, he may be called the Arch-Mediocrity of English politics.” \*

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\* “Political Portraits,” pp. 103–107.



## X.

### THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.



“**T**HERE are statesmen,” says the critic of the *London Daily News*, “who persistently resist change, and of these Lord Salisbury is in England the most conspicuous living instance.” The same writer elsewhere says that “Lord Salisbury is one of the most striking, and, in a certain sense, one of the most pathetic figures in modern political life. He is a hopeless statesman, or is animated only by such hope as is too like despair to impose on prudence the painful necessity of smothering it. An artist might take him for a picture of forlorn suspense, or as the central figure in the representation of a dauntless struggle against overwhelming odds. There is a certain grimness of aspect about him, as of the leader of a lost cause resolved to fight on, though well assured that nothing but defeat awaits him. He is a political Prometheus, whose breast the Radical vulture tears, an Ajax defying the light-

ning, an Ixion on his wheel, anything which symbolizes defiance, and resistance to a power with which it is vain to contend ; or he may be compared to Enoch Arden upon his desert island—‘a shipwreck’d sailor waiting for a sail ; no sail from day to day.’ Lord Salisbury is waiting for a phantom or foundered vessel, the Conservative Reaction, which does not heave in sight,\* to bear him from exile. ‘It cometh not,’ he saith ; ‘I am aweary, aweary.’ He is at war with the tendencies of his age. He has set himself seriously to do that which the late Lord Derby undertook as a mere matter of phraseology, and in a lightness of heart as blithe as M. Emile Ollivier’s, and that is to stem the tide of democracy. This he essays, not with Lord Derby’s reserved intention of going along with the tide if it should prove the stronger, but with a misgiving that, after all, he cannot stem it, but that it will sweep him away. His attitude is that of some heroic watchman upon a dike in Holland, when the sea threatens to break in ; and no one but himself will perceive the danger. Lord Salisbury is animated by false alarms, but they are true to him ; and while the peril is in his view real and close at hand, the rescue is distant and problematical. The Conservative Reaction may not come at all, or it may come too late to save anything. It is a fancy with which his imagination plays : an illusion which does not deceive him, a day-dream of which he perceives the flimsiness. In the meantime, his resolute integrity and almost cynical candor will not allow him to make any compromise with the false principle which is in the ascendant. He will not burn in-

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\* [Written in 1873.]

cense to it, or enter on its service; but will only and always resist and expose it."\*

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoigne Cecil, third Marquis of Salisbury, is the son of the second Marquis; his mother being the daughter of Bamber Gascoigne, Esq. He was born at Hatfield, February 13, 1839, and was educated at Eton and at Christ Church College, Oxford, becoming afterwards a Fellow of All Souls. He first entered public life in August, 1853, as Member for Stamford, and remained in Parliament in that capacity until, April 12th, 1868, he succeeded to the Marquisate. He was Secretary of State for India in 1866-7, and was again appointed in 1874. He married Georgina, daughter of the late Hon. Sir Edward Hall Alderson, and has had eight children.

A careful Parliamentary observer thus describes the personal appearance and manner of this nobleman :

"We have said nothing as yet of Lord Salisbury's appearance, or of his manner of speaking. About both there is something hardly to be described, but which young ladies would indicate by the much abused word 'interesting,' and which we may endeavor to convey to our readers by the word melancholy. It is but seldom that his fine, powerful face does not wear a certain air of melancholy, and the tones of his voice are, as a rule, subdued and plaintive.

"He is an effective public speaker— terse, clear, and vigorous at all times; and though not eloquent, in the ordinary acceptation of the word—that is to say, not rhetorical in his speech—he is never feeble, and he frequently speaks with remarkable power. Now that the acidity of

\* "Political Portraits," p. 76.

his earlier years is passing away—nothing but a grateful flavor remaining to remind us of what he once was—no one can fail to derive pleasure from listening to him when he is speaking on any question of importance: and the dignity and courtesy which, as a rule, characterize his manner, well befit the place in which he now occupies so distinguished a position.”\*

Of the “acidity” said by all observers to have marked the earlier years of Lord Salisbury, Justin McCarthy gives this graphic delineation:

“One young man of brains there was on the Tory side of the House of Commons, who did not like Disraeli, and never professed to like him. This was Lord Robert Cecil, who subsequently became Viscount Cranborne, and now sits in the House of Lords as Marquis of Salisbury. Lord Robert Cecil was by far the ablest scion of noble Toryism in the House of Commons. Younger than Lord Stanley, he had not Lord Stanley’s solidity and caution, but he had much more of original ability; he had brilliant ideas, great readiness in debate, and a perfect genius for saying bitter things in the bitterest tone. The younger son of a wealthy peer, he had, in consequence of a dispute with his father, manfully accepted honorable poverty, and was glad, for no short time, to help out his means by the use of his pen. He wrote in the *Quarterly Review*, the time-honored organ of Toryism; and after a while certain political articles regularly appearing in that periodical became identified with his name. One great object of these articles seemed to be to denounce Mr. Disraeli and warn

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 207.

the Tory party against him as a traitor, certain in the end to sell and surrender their principles. Lord Robert Cecil was an ultra-Tory—or at least thought himself so—I feel convinced that his intellect and his experience will set him free one day. He was a Tory on principle, and would listen to no compromise. People did not at first see how much ability there was in him—very few, indeed, saw how much of genuine manhood and nobleness there was in him. His tall, bent, awkward figure; his prematurely bald crown, his face with an outline and a beard that reminded one of a Jew peddler from the Minorities, his ungainly gestures, his unmelodious voice, and the extraordinary and wanton bitterness of his tongue, set the ordinary observer strongly against him. He seemed to delight in being gratuitously offensive. Let me give one illustration. He assailed Mr. Gladstone's financial policy one night, and said it was like the practice of a pettifogging attorney. This was rather coarse and it was received with loud murmurs of disapprobation, but Lord Robert went on unheeding. Next night, however, when the debate was resumed, he rose and said he feared he had used language the previous evening which was calculated to give offense, and which he could not justify. There were murmurs of encouraging applause—nothing delights the House of Commons like an unsolicited and manly apology. Yes, he had, on the previous night, in a moment of excitement, compared the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the practice of a pettifogging attorney. That was language which on sober consideration he felt he could not justify and ought not to have used, 'and therefore,' said Lord Robert, 'I beg leave to offer my sincere apology'—

here Mr. Gladstone half rose from his seat, with face of eager generosity, ready to pardon even before fully asked—‘I beg leave to tender my sincere apology—to the attorneys!’ Half the House roared with laughter, the other half with anger—and Gladstone threw himself back in his seat with an expression of mingled disappointment, pity and scorn, on his pallid, noble features.

“There was something so wanton, something so nearly approaching to outrageous buffoonery, in conduct like this, on the part of Lord Robert Cecil, that it was long before impartial observers came to recognize the fine intellect and the manly character that were disguised under such an unprepossessing exterior. When the Tories came into power, the great place of Secretary for India was given to Lord Robert, who had then become Viscount Cranborne, and the responsibilities of office wrought as complete a change in him as the wearing of the crown did in Harry the Fifth. No man ever displayed in so short a time greater aptitude for the duties of the office he had undertaken, or a loftier sense of its tremendous moral and political responsibility, than did Lord Cranborne during his too brief tenure of the Indian Secretaryship. The cynic had become a statesman, the intellectual gladiator an earnest champion of exalted political principle. The license of tongue, in which Lord Cranborne had reveled while yet a free lance, he absolutely renounced when he became a responsible minister. He extorted the respect and admiration of Gladstone and Bright, and indeed of every one who took the slightest interest in the condition and the future of India. The manner of his leaving office became him, too, almost as much as his occupation of it. He was sincerely

opposed to a sudden lowering of the franchise, and he insisted that his party ought to think nothing of power when compared with principle. He found that Disraeli was determined to surrender anything rather than power, and he withdrew from the uncongenial companionship. He resigned office, and dropped into the ranks once more, never hesitating to express his conviction of the utter insincerity of the Conservative leader. He would have been a sharp and stinging thorn in Disraeli's side, only that death intervened and took away, not him, but his father. The death of his elder brother had made Lord Robert Cecil Viscount Cranborne; the death of his father now converted Viscount Cranborne into the Marquis of Salisbury, and condemned him to the languid, inert, lifeless atmosphere of the House of Peers. The sincere pity of all who admired him followed the brilliant Salisbury in his melancholy descent. I should despair of conveying to an American reader unacquainted with English politics any adequate idea of the profundity and hopelessness of the fall which precipitates a young, ardent and gifted politician from the brilliant battle-ground of the House of Commons into the lifeless, Lethæan pool of the House of Lords.

"Still, the Tory party may be led, as it has been, by a chief in the House of Lords, although its great and splendid fights must be fought in the Commons. If then, in our time, Toryism ever should again become a principle which a man of genius and high character could fairly fight for, it has a leader ready to its hand in the Marquis of Salisbury."\*

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\* "Modern Leaders," by Justin McCarthy, p. 131.

Of the early literary career of Lord Salisbury, and of the gradual development of his character, another writer gives this description :

“ The young nobleman had the audacity to seek to win his spurs in two fields at the same time. As a Member of the House of Commons, it was of course right and proper that he should follow the example of the other younger sons of great noblemen, and make speeches in which he measured himself without the slightest diffidence with the foremost statesmen and politicians of the day. In the House of Commons, all, from the Prime Minister down to the youngest member, are upon a footing of equality ; and it is one of the most delightful privileges which a seat in that assembly confers, that a man, whatever may be his own position or want of position, whatever his ability or lack of ability, may at any time cross swords with the most distinguished political leaders.

“ There was, therefore, nothing remarkable in the fact that Lord Robert Cecil, though very young, and not yet thoroughly ‘formed,’ should early distinguish himself by making speeches, the prevailing characteristics of which were flippancy and bitterness, and which were mainly directed against men who were the recognized chiefs of their parties.

“ But it was altogether a different matter when it began to be whispered about that the young patrician was endeavoring to win for himself a name in another arena, and that he was already becoming known as one of that band of brilliant writers which gave to the early career of the *Saturday Review* a splendor such as has scarcely been enjoyed by any other political journal. Then indeed men

who had the proper contempt entertained by society for the mean creatures, whose lot it is to guide public opinion by anonymous pens, shook their heads, and 'hoped the young man might not live to regret the step he had taken ;' whilst he found—doubtless to his surprise—that even in the most powerful and distinguished legislative assembly in the world, a man who is known to be connected with the press, gains for himself additional consideration, even though it may be a consideration closely allied to fear and dislike.

"The Marquis of Salisbury is not a man to be flattered, and we therefore do not hesitate to say that his early career was one which, though it might be full of promise, was yet in itself anything but brilliant. It is said that when Lord Robert began to write for the *Saturday Review*, his literary productions were little, if at all, above the level of mediocrity ; but that the late editor of that journal found in him the most tractable and diligent of pupils, and that eventually, though by slow and laborious steps, he gained not merely proficiency but genuine power in the use of his pen.

"We do not vouch for the truth of this statement, though it comes to us upon good authority ; but if it be true it is strikingly characteristic of Lord Salisbury's whole life.

"His career has been one of steady progress—the result, of concentrated hard work—and the position which he now occupies is due far more to his diligence and perseverance than to the accident of his birth. His political life, it has more than once been said, may be divided into three stages, distinguished by the three different titles he has

borne. He began life as Lord Robert Cecil; he had gained a great step in advance upon his starting-point when, through the death of his elder brother, he became Viscount Cranborne, and as Marquis of Salisbury he has shown a ripeness and breadth of judgment such as were hardly to be expected of him in either of the earlier periods of his life.

"As to the first of these periods it was one in which—speaking figuratively rather than literally—it may be said of him that he was 'very young.' The prevailing impression produced by his writings during that period is the impression of extreme youth. They are crude, as very youthful productions generally are; they are remarkable too for an acidity which is not altogether unpleasant in a young man's first essays, but which would be simply intolerable if habitually displayed by a man of the world of mature age and judgment. They are flippant also, and careless. In fact they are boyish; and, like everything else boyish, they display that want of finish which, according to Mr. Disraeli, still distinguishes Lord Salisbury's invective.

"It was, however, during this period that Lord Robert won his spurs. He became known as one of the most dashing skirmishers in the political battlefield. Daring, even to audacity, he was at all times ready to rush single-handed into the fight with those who were his superiors in weight of metal; and though he received many an overthrow in these rough tilts, he succeeded in establishing for himself a reputation which was no doubt intensely gratifying to him as a young man, but which could hardly have satisfied his more mature ambition. He became known

as a cynic who was ready to scoff at everything, as a critic whose eyes were keen to search out the smallest flaw in the armor of an opponent, as the possessor of a bitter tongue which was able at all times to sting those against whom it was employed ; as a master of invective, which, even though it might lack finish, most assuredly did not lack power. There was, of course, something very juvenile about this kind of reputation. The danger was that Lord Robert might have rested satisfied with it. Had he done so, he would by this time have degenerated into another John Arthur Roebuck, or a lesser Earl Grey.

“But as years passed on, and the young nobleman, in whose private life there were not a few circumstances affecting the view he took of society and politics, gained wider ideas of the world in which he lived, the cynicism, which was his prevailing characteristic, was softened ; and though he still showed himself impatient of party discipline, and unwilling to submit to the restraints which bound his companions and friends ; though there was still, in fact, not a little of the Bohemian about him, he showed that he was learning useful lessons, and was gradually finding for himself his real path in life. This transition era is that associated with the title which he bore for a few years of Lord Cranborne.

“It was during this time that he succeeded to high office under the Crown, and became the ruler, as Indian Secretary, of our splendid Eastern Empire. Here was a work which might have satisfied the ambition of any man, and which fully satisfied that of Lord Cranborne. He was able now to lay aside his reviewing, and those smart criticisms on the politics of the day, in which he had spared neither

and nor for, and one of the signs of which was that he was an ever-widening breach between himself and the leader of his party in the House of Commons.

The great task of governing India and governing it, occupied all his time and attention. He knew fully nothing of that task when he entered upon it. But he who worked under him in the India Office are still ready to bear testimony to the devotion with which he laboured; to the unremitting industry he displayed to make himself master of the minutest details of the duties imposed on him; to the ceaseless industry with which he worked day and night, in order that he might have nothing to coach himself with in the performance of his Herculean task. The result is, that those associated with him in the government of India are ready now to bear testimony to the fact that his tenure of the Secretaryship was in many respects more successful than that of most of the men who have been his immediate predecessors and successors.

It was during his term of office that he succeeded in a great degree in laying aside the flippant cynicism of his earlier manner. His official speeches were distinguished by their clearness and their brevity—in both of which respects they formed a marked and most agreeable contrast to those of the statesman whom he had succeeded, Lord Halifax; and, weighed by the responsibilities of great office, he was not long in learning that the art of governing the world is not so simple and so easily acquired as in his juvenile days he had imagined." \*

Circumstances which would have made the career of

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\* "Cabinet Leaders," p. 199.

any other man of at all equal, or even of much inferior capacity, have been fatal to Lord Salisbury. They have probably forfeited him his place in history. He will always be a conspicuous figure in the Parliamentary skirmishes of his time ; but a Member of Parliament is like an actor—he is forgotten when he is off the stage. Lord Salisbury was intended to play, for good or for evil, a heroic part ; and he has been reduced to commonplace. Under a despotic government Lord Salisbury might possibly have been a wise and beneficent ruler. He would even now, it is most likely, be a first-rate Viceroy of India. In France, had he been Minister forty-two years ago, he certainly would have overturned the throne as Polignac did ; but he would probably have made the very principle of Monarchy so odious as to have anticipated in July, 1830, the Republic of February, 1848. In Prussia, a few months ago, as a Member of the House of Lords, he might have led an opposition to Bismarck, which would have made a blank tablet of existing institutions, and introduced the spectral figure of the Revolution, which haunts his dreams and his waking hours too. The inheritance of a great name and a historic peerage, and of immense wealth and social influence, has made him simply a Parliamentary gladiator and critic. He cannot become the administrative or legislative instrument of the convictions of his countrymen, because he does not share them, and is too honest to affect to share them ; he has not even such sympathy with the ideas of his age and country as would enable him to influence them. He cannot lead the party of resistance ; for there is really no party of resistance. There is a Conservative majority (so calling itself) in the House of Lords,

which applauds his attacks on the Ministry, which is delighted with his often very just and searching criticisms of their legislative and administrative blunders, and which assents in the abstract to the maxims of policy he lays down ; but which for six months of office would do all, and more than all, it has denounced, and would cap reform by revolution.

“ Hence Lord Salisbury’s tears ; and hence the mission that he has undertaken. He knows that there is no party of resistance in England ; and he has set himself to create one. A few years ago he had persuaded himself that it was all Mr. Disraeli’s fault, and that, once rid of him, the Conservative party would resume its old function in English political life. He has since enlarged his studies of history, and has discovered that the sinister tactics which he regarded as the invention of Mr. Disraeli were pursued before him by the Duke of Wellington, by Sir Robert Peel, and by the late Lord Derby, if indeed, as a Minister, the late Lord Derby can be distinguished from Mr. Disraeli. But the lesson which he might have learned from those long-delayed researches has apparently not been brought home to him. When he finds four men so different as the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Derby, and Mr. Disraeli pursuing, through nearly half a century, a similar course on each great public question as it arises ; when he finds that in office the Conservative party invariably carries out the Liberal policy, and that the question is simply one of instruments—Wellington or Grey, Peel or Russell, Disraeli or Gladstone—the doubt might present itself to a mind even less acute than his, whether any **elimination** of distrusted leaders, or any manipulation of

parties, can produce a change. The spirit of the time, or to narrow the phrase to more apprehensible limits, the definite convictions and the indefinite feelings of all classes of Englishmen, set in a particular direction—the direction of what we should call Liberal, and what Lord Salisbury calls revolutionary ideas. The Conservative party, though the fact is concealed from them by the inheritance of party phrases and the impulses of opposition, really share these ideas ; they make only a mock resistance out of office, or if the resistance is strenuous, then it is merely to prepare the way for an absolute capitulation when they are in what they are pleased to call power, and when responsibility for the actual administration of affairs strips off their illusions. If this be not the true account of their conduct, we cannot suggest any other reconcilable with personal or political honor. This fact, if it be recognized as one, explains Lord Salisbury's position. \* \* \*

“The whole social order, in his view, is divided but by a thin crust from the abyss. The stable and regular rests upon the tumultuous and chaotic. The certainties are at the surface, the uncertainties are below. Lord Salisbury does not believe that the human nature out of which the present adjustment of affairs has sprung would, in case of disturbance, secrete institutions and usages as suitable to it. The England of the present day is the result of a chapter of accidents ; and he has no confidence that accident will be as favorable if we trust ourselves to it again. Defending English institutions, not on the ground that they are in harmony with reason and justice, but because they exist, any reform basing itself on reason and justice is especially distasteful to him, inasmuch as these principles

admit of revolutionary applications. The smallest change is a denial of the argument of a right to perpetuity from the fact of existence ; and the more insignificant it appears, the more insidious and dangerous it is. \* \* \*

“The secret of Lord Salisbury’s ‘stern and unbending’ Toryism’—that which differentiates it from the pliant Conservatism of his political neighbors—lies in his deep-seated skepticism as to human nature, and his desponding views as to the course and tendencies of society. We have, he seems to say, an existing social order, perhaps not very good in itself, certainly not the best conceivable. But it has this advantage over all possible rivals, that it exists and they do not. A sort of secondary English nature has adapted itself to the laws and institutions which we find among us ; the habits of men recognize these old restraints. Remove them, and the secondary English nature goes with them. The state of primitive nature, which in Lord Salisbury’s theory, as in that of Hobbes, is a state of war, returns, and the aboriginal savage leaps forth. Lord Salisbury has apparently been a close student of the first French Revolution ; and its wild horrors and follies, and the century almost of unsettlement which has followed, have had a sort of terrible fascination for him. But his studies here also do not begin early enough. He fails to perceive that it was the blindness of obstinate resistance which brought about the French Revolution, and that the tactics of timely concession which have been pursued by Wellington and Peel, by Derby and Disraeli, and which he laments and denounces, have preserved England.” \* \* \*

“It is a misfortune that he has never been placed in a position which would overcome or counteract his native

difficulty of understanding the majority of his countrymen. Among the *benè nati* and *benè vestiti*, but *mediocriter docti*, who form the select society of All Souls, at Oxford ; and as a representative who never had a constituency, for the member for Stamford is practically member for 'Burleigh-house by Stamford town,' Lord Salisbury has had little opportunity for knowing his fellow-countrymen, or learning to abate that scorn of them to which his temperament and his habits as a man of letters incline him. That scorn, it must be admitted, is impartially distributed over all ranks. If his distrust seems greatest of the laboring classes, it is probably because, in his view, they are held to good behavior by less powerful artificial restraints, and by a less developed second nature than the upper and middle classes. He seems, indeed, to be haunted by the image of Mr. Odger and Mr. Bradlaugh leading a revolutionary mob into Hatfield Park, and committing the Elizabethan mansion again to the flames. Lord Salisbury's unchecked individuality makes him an interesting subject of political study, but it almost disqualifies him for modern statesmanship. His revolt against Liberal policy and Conservative tactics is a revolt against the very conditions of Constitutional Government. While he remains what he is, he can never be the leader of the Conservative party. In conceivable, but almost impossible, circumstances, he might be the chief of a counter-revolution." \*

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 79, 82, 85, 87, 90.



## XI.

### SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE

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**I**T seems to be generally admitted that, in case of the prolonged illness or retirement of Mr. Disraeli, the claim to the Conservative leadership in the House of Commons must lie between two members—Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Justin McCarthy thus easily disposes of the former of these candidates: "Sir Stafford Northcote looks like a Bonn or Heidelberg professor, and has a fair average intellect, fit for commonplace finance and elementary politics; there is not a ghost of an idea in him."\* The London correspondent of the *New York Nation* is a shade less trenchant in his characterization:—

"The ministerial party \* \* \* would be left in the

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\* "English Toryism and its Leaders," in "Modern Leaders," p. 15.

hearse to the guidance of Sir Stafford Northcote. You are probably nearly as well qualified to take the measure of his capacity as we are on this side of the Atlantic. As one of the Joint High Commission of 1871, he is not unknown to you. Here he is considered a man of fair capacity and creditable assiduity. He was trained by Mr. Gladstone, and has learned from him some rudimentary lessons in finance. He has the gift of a conciliatory temper, and he is a tolerable matter of fact speaker, with a pleasing if not a convincing manner, and his opinions are exactly of that hybrid type between Liberalism and Conservatism which is now prevalent in England. He could never steer the ship in troublous times; but in calm weather, with a disciplined and compact crew, anxious to keep the Tory vessel in, and an undisciplined and divided Opposition not particularly anxious to turn it out, he will do the work quite well. Much would necessarily depend upon the Prime Minister. If Mr. Disraeli remained in office, and was well enough to take part in the great debates from time to time with anything of his old acuteness, Sir Stafford Northcote might represent him in the daily formal work. But if the more unfavorable accounts of Mr. Disraeli's health are true, Sir Stafford Northcote's duties and opportunities for good and evil would be grave. The future Prime Minister would be a member of the House of Lords—the Duke of Richmond in all probability, because rumor (and she is not always false) has it that Lord Derby will not serve under Lord Salisbury, and Lord Salisbury will not be ruled by Lord Derby. The leader, therefore, in the Lower House will hold a most important and most difficult place in British politics. Will Sir Stafford Northcote prove

strong enough for the place? That is a question time alone can solve."\*

The author of "Men and Manner in Parliament" places him higher still :

"Of all Mr. Disraeli's lieutenants in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote perhaps stands highest. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is a Tory of the school of Sir Robert Peel, of whom he may, by a process analogous to that by which we reach 'the rope' in the story of The House that Jack Built, be also considered the pupil. He was for some years the private secretary of Sir Robert Peel's great disciple, Mr. Gladstone, and has, as his speeches frequently show, profited by the proximity. In forming his Ministry Mr. Disraeli seems to have sought for contrasts to the *personnel* of the late Government, even to the points of beard and whisker. On other grounds it is impossible to conceive a more complete contrast than that presented by Sir Stafford and his two immediate predecessors in the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Gladstone raised the exposition of the Budget to the level of the highest oratorical displays of the session. In Mr. Lowe's time the Budget night was an event of importance beyond the limits of the interest that attached to the disclosure of the Ministerial financial programme. Sir Stafford Northcote has brought the Budget speech down to a little more than a dry business statement inflated rather than adorned by argument and illustration. Whittier might have been thinking of him instead of the late Mr. Sumner when he wrote,

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"Nation," Jan. 28, 1875.

'No sense of humor dropped its oil  
On the hard ways his purpose went ;  
Small play of fancy lightened toil,  
He spake alone the thing he meant.'

"It must be added that the right hon. gentleman, whilst generally succeeding in making perfectly clear what he would say, is somewhat prone to be prosy. He 'hums' and 'has,' and harks back to matters he has already discussed, makes prolonged diversions into by-paths, and, putting the fact moderately, is twice as long saying what he has at heart as is either necessary or, in the interest of his argument, desirable. In introducing his first Budget he spoke for two hours and forty minutes, which, it may be urged, was not an extravagant demand on the attention of the House, seeing that when Mr. Gladstone, twenty-one years earlier, brought in his first Budget he spoke for five hours. But it is well known that, generally for sufficient reasons, one man may steal a horse whilst it is forbidden to another to look over the hedge. A harsh dry voice, a countenance expressionless, perhaps by reason of a superabundance of hair, an unsympathetic manner, and an almost total absence of the charm of imagination or fancy, combine to make two hours and a half of Sir Stafford Northcote worse than twenty-four hours of Mr. Gladstone. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is, however, a safe business man, and in the temper in which Parliament met was a welcome foil to the brilliancy of his predecessor." \*

The same writer elsewhere says : "There is a wonderfully wise and statesmanlike air about Sir Stafford North-

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 87

cote, as he sits, spectacled and bearded, on the Treasury bench, which of itself would go a long way towards acquiring the confidence and the submission of the House. But the Right Honorable Baronet is not dependent on his personal aspect alone for his claim to supremacy. He is not a good speaker, but he is a ready one, sees a long way through a question, and can, if need be, cleverly fence with it. He has a good deal of tact, is fair-minded, honorable, frank, and at very long intervals displays little flashes of humorous perception, which are as precious as solitary stars twinkling in an apparently hopelessly murky sky. He is always listened to with that respect the House of Commons intuitively feels and liberally awards to any man who has succeeded in convincing it that he is an honest and clear thinker, and thus he personally enjoys the confidence of both sides of the House." \*

The Right Honorable Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, Bart., is the grandson of the previous baronet of that name; was born in London, Oct. 27, 1818, and was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, where he graduated first class in classics, third class in mathematics. In 1843 he married Cecilia Frances, daughter of Thomas Farrer, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn. He was called to the bar in 1847; entered Parliament for Dudley, in March, 1855; was member for Stamford from 1858 to 1866, when he was elected to represent North Devon. He was Private Secretary to Mr. Gladstone when that gentleman was Secretary to the Board of Trade, and was Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1859. In 1862, he published a book entitled "Twenty Years of

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 264.

Commercial Policy." He became President of the Board of Trade under Lord Derby, in 1866, and Secretary of State for India in the following year. In this capacity he had opportunity to render unusual services, which have been thus described :

"It was during his term of office that the Abyssinian Expedition was resolved upon and carried out ; and to Sir Stafford Northcote, more than to any other man save Lord Napier, are we indebted for the circumstance that this noble though costly enterprise, instead of ending in a repetition of the Crimean muddle, resulted in a brilliant and almost bloodless victory. \* \* \* \*

"As a mere matter of fact, it must be owned that Sir Stafford Northcote, although he has no pretensions to the highest class of statesmanship, showed himself upon that occasion to be an administrator of far more than average ability. To him fell one of the largest parts in connection with the Expedition.

"Whilst it was in preparation, he devoted himself for several months exclusively to it and to his other official duties, laboring day and night to perform the Herculean task imposed upon him. Thanks to his energy and discretion, Sir Robert Napier found everything at Massowah which he required, and was enabled to carry his army up to Magdala almost without the loss of a single life, and to bring it back again, after the brief struggle with Theodore, absolutely better in health and general condition than when it started. It was very easy for gentlemen afterward to discover that a needless quantity of stores was sent to Abyssinia, and that money was expended in procuring from other lands animals or provisions which might have

been obtained at a much smaller cost in the country itself. Let it be remembered, when charges of this kind are made against those who had the conduct of this campaign, that when it was undertaken our knowledge of Abyssinia itself was of the slightest possible description; and that our ideas with respect to the difficulties and dangers which awaited our troops were, in consequence, naturally exaggerated.

“Let it also be borne in mind that defeat from any cause in that mysterious country would have been an almost irreparable blow to the reputation of England abroad, that the news of our disasters would not only have been received with a chuckle of satisfaction in New York, in Paris, in Berlin, and in St. Petersburg, but that it would have occasioned secret rejoicings throughout our Indian Empire. The importance of the matter at issue in the campaign could not be exaggerated. Happily the undertaking was a complete, an unexampled success—thanks, chiefly, if not entirely, to Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Napier.

“When we read this chapter in our military history, we sigh at the remembrance of the days when Red Tape was the sacred object of official worship, and when our gallant men in the Crimea were sacrificed to it by thousands. No minister of state—not even Mr. Lowe himself—could show a more complete freedom from the trammels of mere routine than did Sir Stafford Northcote upon this occasion; and his conduct in the emergency which then arose undoubtedly marks him out as an administrator of the highest ability—one of those men, too rarely to be found, to whom the country can trust in the midst of a great crisis.

"It is because this Abyssinian campaign has really been the greatest achievement of Sir Stafford's political career that we give it this prominence in our sketch. We believe that his success on this occasion has been the turning-point of his life. We do not mean that it has won for him high honors or great influence, but that it has made him conscious of his own powers and of the manner in which those powers can best be used. Before he was called upon to take his part in this emergency, he occasionally displayed a timidity in the exercise of his influence that did not a little to mar his usefulness. Now, however, he has acquired confidence in himself, and in his ability to meet any call which may be made upon him, and the result is that he will in the future take a much more prominent part in public affairs than was previously the case.

"In the first instance, Sir Stafford Northcote won his spurs in Parliament as an authority upon matters of finance. Common rumor, for several years, designated him for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, whenever Mr. Disraeli was called upon to assume the Premiership. When that event did happen, the right hon. baronet was far too deeply engaged in the conduct of the Abyssinian War to be able to desert the Indian Office for the Treasury; but there is some reason to think that he will occupy the post of Finance Minister in the next Conservative Administration.\*

"He has undoubtedly shown himself an acute and able critic of the financial policy of the Liberal Government, and his views upon the question of national finance have

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\* [Written in 1872.]

been proved to be both sound and judicious. He can never hope to attain Mr. Gladstone's wonderful command of figures, nor could he aspire to Mr. Lowe's adroitness of manipulation ; but should he ever be called upon to take charge of the National Exchequer, he may be relied upon as a safe and able Minister ; one who will neither dazzle the country by perilous feats of daring, nor bewilder it by ingenious changes in the incidence of taxation, the only merit of which is their ingenuity. On the contrary, if Sir Stafford Northcote, rather than Mr. Ward Hunt, is to be our future Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, we shall expect to have in him a Minister whose wise measures will not only lighten the burden of taxation upon the people at large, but will foster and encourage the commerce of the country. So long as he continues a member of the Conservative party, that party never need want an efficient and reliable Minister of Finance.

“ But whilst Sir Stafford devoted himself for many years to the study of financial subjects, and showed great acuteness as well as a special knowledge in his mode of dealing with them, it must not be supposed that he neglected matters of more general interest. He has taken a considerable interest in education, and whilst his own views on that subject are, no doubt, of a somewhat prescribed and narrow character, he has shown that he can rise above any party politics, in dealing with a question of national importance. There are those who say he is not a ‘ deep ’ man, and it seems to us that the charge is to a certain extent well founded ; but if he does not give evidence in his speeches of any very profound thought, or close and long-continued

study, he constantly gives evidence that he is not a mere politician, but that he is a man of high culture and enlightened sympathies.

"Too many of our political leaders seem to be so wrapped up in politics that they have no eyes nor ears for anything else. This cannot be alleged against Sir Stafford Northcote. Again and again has he shown that his sympathies extend beyond the range of party, and that politics, though they may occupy the first, do not occupy the only place in his mind. His efforts in the cause of education in Devonshire are well known in that county, whilst the social progress of the people, and of the poor especially, has always been a matter in which he has shown a deep interest. In this respect he may indeed be said to occupy a middle position between the country squire and the statesman. He possesses that strong sympathy with those around him, that feeling of personal friendship for the classes immediately dependent upon him, which distinguish the English country gentleman; but allied to these he has the higher instinct and the clearer judgment of the statesman. Few men are better fitted than he to attract at once the popularity of the masses and the confidence of the upper classes.

"A striking evidence of his popularity with his opponents was given last year, when he was chosen by Mr. Gladstone to accompany Lord de Grey to Washington to arrange the Alabama Treaty. No choice could have been received with greater favor on both sides of the House, and whilst it did honor to Mr. Gladstone's impartiality and judgment, it was an unmistakable proof of the esteem which it is Sir Stafford Northcote's good fortune to enjoy.

"In the House of Commons, where he enjoys an enviable reputation for fairness and candour. The many men have fewer bitter words to their party speeches to regret than the ex-Indian Secretary. His conciliatory manner towards his opponents, the fairness with which he admits their virtues, and the leniency with which he judges their faults, all tend to increase his popularity. He seems to emulate Lord Derby's famed moderation and impartiality; and however desirable these qualities may be in the judge, they are not always to be sought for in the ardent member of a political party. There is too in his speeches a vast amount of common sense. He may not agree to the philosophical views of some members of past and present Cabinets; but he is at least entirely free from the sentimental and misty ideas which float through the brains of too many of our politicians. He always knows the point at which he wishes to arrive; and he can always describe his opinions in clear and simple language.

"To oratorical ability he has no pretensions. His speeches are, indeed, chiefly remarkable for the rapidity with which they are delivered; but they are at least lucid, and 'rich in saving common sense.' He has been charged, and not altogether without foundation, with talking platitudes; but, after all, a man had far better talk platitudes than talk nonsense, and there are not a few Cabinet Ministers who are chargeable with the latter offense. Upon all matters connected with the Indian Empire he shows an amount of knowledge which speaks much for his industry; indeed, it may be said that he is now the spokesman of the Opposition in the House of Commons upon Indian questions. His political opinions are staunchly Conservative,

and throughout the critical period of 1866-8, he was an earnest and unswerving supporter of Mr. Disraeli, who has in him one of the most loyal of his colleagues." \*

Sir Stafford Northcote was well known in the United States, as one of the High Joint Commission for the Alabama Treaty ; and he is now (1875)—even as predicted by the writer just quoted—Chancellor of the Exchequer in Mr. Disraeli's Ministry.

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\* " Cabinet Portraits," pp. 180, 181.



## XII.

### MR. GATHORNE HARDY.



**M**R. GATHORNE HARDY," says the keen critic of the *Daily News*, "is habitually received as the sure successor of Mr. Disraeli in the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Commons; and is sometimes hinted at as an actual competitor for the post, or as even now practically dividing it with his titular chief. If there be any rivalry between the two statesmen, it is of a friendly sort. They do not excommunicate each other, like Pope and Anti-Pope. Their attitude is rather the brotherly one expressed in the stage direction in the play of the *Rehearsal*, 'Enter the two Kings of Brentford, hand in hand,' to which the stage practice used, we believe, to add, 'smelling at one nosegay.' But, in truth, whatever his hopes for the future, Mr. Gathorne Hardy has no pretensions to be a second King of Brentford. Mr. Disraeli keeps the royal nosegay in his own hand, even though he may allow his destined successor, now and then, as an act of favor, and as a foretaste of the coming glory,

to smell at it. He may permit Mr. Gathorne Hardy to exercise, in his absence, viceregal functions. Occasionally, like an old coachman training a promising novice, he may give him the reins, and let him take the box seat, while he himself sits by, to keep a watchful eye on the driving, and to see that nothing goes wrong. However, all these illustrations fail perfectly to express the relations between the Conservative leader and his first lieutenant in the House of Commons. Without being really a rival, and departing from formal subordination, there can be little doubt that Mr. Hardy does indirectly exercise a certain degree of authority. He may be compared to a Coadjutor Bishop appointed to check and overrule, under the guise of assisting, a superior of suspected soundness in the faith.

"There is one immense point in Mr. Gathorne Hardy's favor, that he has the confidence of the great bulk of the Conservative party, and that Mr. Disraeli has not. If they do not positively distrust their brilliant chief, they do not understand him. He is a potent magician, who has conjured with Conservative principles, which are at the same time 'truly Liberal' principles, until his bewildered followers scarcely know whether Toryism does not include, implicitly, the Five Points of the Charter. Mr. Disraeli may practice only white magic, but there is something uncanny about all conjuring. Now, Mr. Gathorne Hardy is no conjuror. There is nothing in him beyond the comprehension of the most ordinary Tory squire, or the most vulgar Manchester Reactionist. He does not soar to the heights nor go down to the depths. He jogs along the highways, not, even in a political sense, riding across country. He is a Tory after the Tory party's own heart.

Gazing on itself, like Eve at the fountain, or Narcissus in the stream, the image which the Tory party sees reflected back upon it is that of Mr. Gathorne Hardy. When it puts the proper charm under its pillow, it dreams of him, as a country girl dreams of her destined husband. The Conservatism of Mr. Disraeli, of Lord Salisbury, and of Lord Derby, widely though they differ, is the deliberate choice of a party connection upon intellectual grounds higher and wider than those of party, and involving a survey of the whole field of politics, and an estimate of social forces and tendencies. Their Conservatism, however sincere and thorough, has its basis in a political rationalism, as the Catholicism of Father Newman has its roots in a theological rationalism. There is a philosophy behind it. Ordinary Toryism distrusts the skeptical premises even more than it welcomes the orthodox conclusion. It is not sure that the conclusion will always follow from the premises, even in the minds which have for the present drawn it thence. Mr. Gathorne Hardy is free from all suspicion. His Toryism is the Toryism of the back benches advanced to the front bench, and elevated to office. In his speech at Bradford, in the recess, he expressed an opinion that the intellectual calibre of the House of Lords was superior to that of the House of Commons. The intellectual calibre of the Conservatism represented by Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, and Lord Cairns, is certainly superior to the intellectual calibre of the Conservatism represented by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Sir John Pakington, and Lord John Manners. Mr. Disraeli redresses the balance, and sways it to the other side.

“Mr. Gathorne Hardy is a Tory of the old school, with

a logical apparatus superadded. His temper, sentiments and propensities are essentially those of the average *Conservative*. The ideas, however, which in the case of the latter are a mere mass of unclassified and unformed impressions to be sifted and sorted, Mr. Hardy perceives and classifies. In him, commonplace *Conservatism* becomes articulate and self-conscious, and that is the source of his recognition as, in a certain sense, the origin and representative, though not yet the leader, of his party. He is, perhaps, not sufficiently in advance of them to be that. This, however, is the difference between him and them, that the notions, imbedded in the heavy clay of the rural mind, and unable to extricate themselves thence, have with Mr. Hardy become exposed, able to move freely among one another, and to arrange themselves into apprehensible propositions, into logical syllogisms, and even into a connected chain of argument, on which seems to be such. Here lies, in great part, the source of the delight with which the *Conservative* party listen to him. When he talks and reasons in his speeches, they, listening, have a faint reflected consciousness of some unassisted mental process which they believe to be thinking and reasoning. They are sensible of mental exertion and exhilaration, and their satisfaction with him merges into a satisfaction with themselves. In the quality and number of his ideas, Mr. Hardy does not differ from the most commonplace *Tory* in the House of Commons, the only difference is that his ideas are distinct, and capable of being variously arranged into propositions and argument suitable to particular occasions. But the number of mental combinations and permutations which can be effected with a rigidly limited supply of thoughts

is scanty ; hence a certain monotony in Mr. Hardy's eloquence, which does not redeem, by any variety of topics, the low level on which it proceeds.

“Mr. Hardy's speaking is, however, for his audience, or for that part of it which agrees with him, exceedingly effective. Its basis and materials are common both to him and them, and this adds enormously to their appreciation of the instrumental skill with which he wields forces that they can turn to no account. He is not devoid of oratorical passion of a certain sort. It is not the passion of the statesmanship which absorbs a nation into itself, and speaks and feels for a whole people ; nor that of a prophet-like warning ; still less, of course, that of revolutionary enthusiasm—it is not the passion of Chatham, or of Burke, or of Vergniaud—but it is more suitable to his topics and to his hearers. It is the passion of the man in possession who is afraid of being turned out. It is anger, blended with virtuous astonishment, and prompted by a scarcely dissembled terror. This seems to be the characteristic feeling of that section of Conservatism which Mr. Hardy represents, and which sees in projects of reform only veiled designs of destruction ; the more deadly in effect for being sometimes specious in appearance. \* \* \*

“This passion of fear gives earnestness to Mr. Hardy's eloquence, though it does not elevate it. Range of reading, depth of reflection, nobility of sentiment, play of fancy, are entirely lacking to it. It is made up of fluent, energetic commonplaces, packed into well-poised sentences, and combined into a duly proportioned structure of speech. What Mr. Hardy has to say is as well said as anything so poor could be. He has vigor of arm and

precision of aim, but his weapons are blunt. Nevertheless, he makes a gallant show of fight, and always comes off from the contest as if victorious. A liquid voice, which is never strained to harshness, makes his oratory pleasant to the ear; and his most strenuous invective never passes the limits of a perfect self-possession." \*

The author of "Men and Manner in Parliament" expresses views somewhat similar :—

"Mr. Gathorne Hardy is, however, the surer of the reversion of Mr. Disraeli's second office, because he alone of all the candidates has a following. To the country gentlemen the Secretary of State for War is, except perhaps in his views on the Regulation of Public Worship, as nearly as possible the model of what a Conservative leader should be. Mr. Disraeli, it is true, somehow or other pilots them into harbor when the sea is rough, and into the fair anchorage of power when winds and waves are propitious. But they cannot understand how he does it, and are vaguely suspicious that, however it be, it is not likely to have been accomplished on really sound Conservative principles. With Mr. Gathorne Hardy the case is different. His mind is not so far above the level of that of the hereditary Conservative that its method of working may not be grasped by him and its processes of procedure understood. Mentally he is so far above the rank and file that the principle of leadership may be introduced, and yet not so far that the idea of companionship and intelligent mutual assistance is altogether eliminated from the compact. Mr. Gathorne Hardy would make a most accept-

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\* "Political Portraits," pp. 183, 191.

able leader to the large majority of Conservative members of the House of Commons. and, *faute de mieux*, he would be fairly popular on the other side. But here, as in the change prognosticated when Mr. Gladstone's final retirement makes room for a successor, the House of Commons will suffer a grievous loss, genius giving place to clever mediocrity and facile officialism." \*

Justin McCarthy will only admit of Mr. Hardy that he "is fluent, as the sand in an hour-glass is fluent,—he can pour out words and serve to mark the passing of time."† A writer in *Fraser's Magazine* concedes to him a very little more :—

"On the Ministerial bench the second-best speaker is Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who has always a vigorous flow of language at his command, and is sometimes, on congenial occasions, not destitute of pregnant ideas. His speeches lend that moral support to the cause of Conservative eloquence which is lacking in Mr. Disraeli. But the party to which Mr. Hardy directly appeals is a very limited one. It is only when he makes himself the champion of a reactionary Conservatism that he is sure of an enthusiastic hearing, and the supporters of reactionary Conservatism are diminishing daily." ‡

"He has a great flow of words," says another observer, "and can pour them forth in intelligible sequence by the hour. But wordiness is not oratory—is even fatal to oratory—and Mr. Gathorne Hardy is excessively wordy.

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 265.

† "Modern Political Leaders," p. 135.

‡ T. H. S. Escott, in *Fraser's Magazine*, Oct., 1874.

He has a good voice for a short speech, but in the absence of modulation it becomes wearisome at the end of the first half hour. He starts off at a gallop, and never draws rein till he is about to sit down, which he often does in a husky and breathless condition. He has some debating power, and uses it with the trained ability of a barrister. But for those who are not moved save by some flight of fancy, some arrow of wit, some lambent flame of passionate eloquence, Mr. Hardy's voice in debate is even as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." \*

The *Nation* correspondent will only allow him to be "a ready, 'rough-and-tumble' sort of orator, with a clear voice and an aptitude for saying hard, uncomfortable things at his opponents. Last year, for instance, when some inoffensive politician, zealous for his country's good, asked a harmless question about some regimental band, Mr. Hardy, being War Minister, recommended him 'to blow his own trumpet, which he was so well qualified to do.' For the moment it 'brought the gallery down,' and the inoffensive politician collapsed. But the House of Commons does not like that sort of thing from a Minister of the Crown. The pervading atmosphere is superior to it. The majority of the members are men accustomed to the tone and spirit of well-bred society, and a coarse snub, such as this of Mr. Hardy's, administered unnecessarily, the House resents and remembers. It does not object to see a troublesome man rebuked by a responsible Minister. It rather enjoys it if well done. But it must be done not coarsely but with finish—such finish as Mr. Disraeli, for instance, has always at command. But even if the House could

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 108.

get over Mr. Hardy's want of finish—and the Conservatives would condone a great deal in an emergency—he would find difficulty in securing a trusty following, owing to his ecclesiastical leanings. He alienated the moderate Protestant party last session by his action on the Public Worship Regulation Act. He did not disguise his Ritualistic proclivities, but on more than one occasion voted with the professed supporters of the Ritualistic movement against Mr. Disraeli and other members of the Cabinet. In the present Puritanic or anti-Romish temper of the House and of the country, these votes would be almost sufficient to prevent Mr. Hardy from taking the place of leader if, owing to Mr. Disraeli's absence, the post should be unfortunately vacant." \*

The Right Honorable Gathorne Hardy is the son of John Hardy, Esq., formerly M. P. for Bradford. He was born at Bradford, Oct. 1, 1814; was educated at Shrewsbury School, and at Oriel College, Oxford; in 1856, entered Parliament as Member for Leominster, and in 1865, was elected over Mr. Gladstone, to represent the University of Oxford. In 1858, he became Under-Secretary for the Home Department, during Lord Derby's second administration, and in 1866, was President of the Poor Law Board, under Lord Derby's third administration, and in May, 1867, became Secretary of State for the Home Department, remaining in that position till December, 1868. He is now (1875) War Secretary under Mr. Disraeli.

"Should Mr. Hardy never again take office—not a likely supposition"—says Wemyss Reid, writing in 1872, "he will undoubtedly live in the grateful remembrance of

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\* "*Nation*," Jan. 28, 1875.

his countrymen as the best Home Secretary whom this generation has seen. And to be even a passably good Home Secretary, not to fail egregiously in that office, which Mr. Hardy filled with such marked success, is a feat of no ordinary kind. For the Home Secretary has perhaps more difficulties to encounter in the performance of his duties than any other Minister of the Crown. Of the importance of his post we need say little. He is first of the five Secretaries of State, taking precedence even of the statesman to whom are intrusted our relations with foreign countries. Virtually he is the ruler of Great Britain; he stands as the representative alike of the Crown and of Parliament in its dealings with the English people. He holds in his hands the prerogative of mercy in the case of every criminal condemned in a court of justice, from the child sentenced to be birched, to the assassin doomed to lose his life. He is held responsible by the popular voice for every one of the failures and indiscretions of every one of the magistrates and judges of the land. He has to maintain order throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain; to advise when the civil forces shall be supplemented and assisted by the military; and to be answerable for all that the troops employed under such circumstances may do. And in addition to all his other duties, he is made the chief constable of the capital, and has to be ready in his place in Parliament to answer the complaints of any querulous nobody who has found a member willing to lay his imaginary grievances at the hands of some metropolitan policeman before that assembly.

“Under any circumstances the accumulation of such functions and responsibilities upon a single individual

must entail a tremendous strain upon the person who is thus honored ; but how great must that strain be in England, where, with unlimited labors, and almost unlimited responsibility, the power of the Minister is strictly circumscribed, and he is often unable to act, not because he does not know how to act, but because the only way open to him is a way upon which our Constitution declares he shall not enter !

“ We need not wonder that the Home Secretary is popularly recognized as the Minister who is always in the wrong, and that no inconsiderable portion of that terrible half-hour in which the Government is submitted to the ‘torture by question’ is daily devoted to the popular exposition of his countless blunders. For ‘blunders’ he is always committing in the eyes of somebody, and until fallible man has discovered the art of satisfying everybody, the Secretary of State for the Home Department will continue to be what he now is—the best abused man in England. Every time he remits a sentence of death, the gentlemen who believe that we are ‘going to the dogs,’ and encouraging murder by the tender-hearted manner in which we administer the laws, will regard him in the light of a personal enemy, if indeed they do not look upon him as the actual accomplice of assassins ; and every time he turns a deaf ear to a petition for mercy, and leaves the law to take its own course, he is reminded by well-meaning philanthropists of the sanctity of human life, and is even asked by pertinacious religious journals of the Pecksniffian creed, how he expects to ‘answer’ for those misdeeds of his, when he, too, shall have to give an account of the things done in the body.

"And what happens in the case of convicted murderers happens constantly in thousands of less noticeable instances. Does some eccentric justice of the peace in Glamorganshire or Cumberland give a decision which is either bad in law, unnecessarily cruel, or foolishly lenient, the Home Secretary has instantly to choose between the alternative of upholding the sentence and being abused as the ally and champion of chartered wrong, and of reversing the decision and being charged with blindness to the difficulties of those upon whom the administration of the law in remote quarters of the country depends. Truly, though his post is almost imperial in its importance and responsibility, it is, so far as personal comfort is concerned, the least desirable of all the great offices of the state.

"But to Mr. Hardy belongs the credit of having filled this office in such a manner as almost to stifle complaint, and that, too, at a most difficult period in our social history. We do not write as party politicians, and we are not afraid that we shall be challenged in our assertion that the Home Government of England was never managed with more tact, dignity, and discretion than during the time that Mr. Hardy was at the head of the office in Whitehall.

"Before he assumed the Home Secretaryship he had shown his abilities as an administrator by the manner in which he had presided over the Poor Law Board, at a time when the condition of the poor, and especially of the sick poor in the metropolis, was attracting unusual attention. Those who know anything of the work of the Poor Law Board, now merged in the Local Government Board, know that the President has a task which is only one degree less disagreeable than that devolving upon the Home Secretary.

"Nothing can well be more difficult than to deal with the thousands of Unions and Boards of Guardians throughout the kingdom, in each one of which some different type of local prejudice is developed. And when, in addition to these difficulties, there is that of satisfying a suddenly aroused public feeling, shocked by revelations which we would fain believe exaggerated, of the condition of the poor amongst us, the post of President of the Poor Law Board becomes an exceptionally difficult one.

"It was at such a crisis as this that Mr. Hardy took office at the head of the Poor Law Board. He was compelled, at a time in every way unfavorable for such an undertaking, to proceed to prompt measures for the reform of the many evils of our workhouse hospitals; and he at once showed how little he had of the official element which is best described as 'redtapeism,' and how fully alive he was to the necessities of the case, by the manner in which he proceeded. He swept away with a strong hand—and despite opposition and abuse, coming as usual from both sides—many of the worst evils of the existing system, and laid a broad and sure foundation for a state of things more creditable to us as a nation. \* \* \*

"It is, however, as a political speaker that he has won his laurels in the House of Commons. We have given him full credit for his impartiality when in office, but in the House of Commons he is the most ardent of partisans. It was the staunch conservatism of which he is the exponent—the real 'old-fashioned' conservatism, which has only been modified as far as was necessary to meet the inevitable changes of the times, and of public feeling—that gained for Mr. Hardy the great honor of being

chosen member for the University of Oxford in place of Mr. Gladstone.

“Here at least was a man upon whose consistency in Conservatism full reliance might be placed—a man who could never be found making terms with Mr. Miall, or indulging in philosophic speculations with respect to the tenure of land or the rights of property! No hair-splitting casuistry, no political or intellectual restlessness, need be feared from Mr. Hardy. A man of good common sense and shrewdness, and with that thorough practical English nature which has so much to do in securing for its owner success in life, he was unquestionably admirably fitted to become the champion and leader of the country gentleman. His views upon some points may be harsh and narrow, but they are essentially the views which the country gentleman holds almost as a part of his religion, and in his faithful allegiance to Mr. Disraeli Mr. Hardy expresses the country gentleman’s fidelity as well as his own.

“By the country gentlemen, indeed, he is regarded with a confidence which is almost enthusiastic, and more than once the world has had occasion to note that he has spoken in the House of Commons almost directly in their name and as their representative. Few persons can doubt that he is destined ultimately to succeed the chief whose faithful lieutenant he has so long been, and by whose side he has labored, since he sat in Parliament, with unbroken fidelity.

“As a debater Mr. Hardy holds a high place in the House. If he does not stand in the first rank of orators, he is but little beneath it, and he has shown that he is able

to cope successfully even with such consummate masters of Parliamentary eloquence as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. He speaks with a freedom and vigor that gives those who hear him a strong sense of his powers; he has a full command of expressive and suitable words; and at times, when under the influence of strong emotion, he can move his audience by the utterance of passages of true and lofty eloquence. But apart from their freshness and their vigor, one of the great charms of his speeches is their evident genuineness. That Mr. Hardy always speaks with a sincerity which is not to be called in question, no one who has heard him can doubt. In his very manner, in the very tones of his voice—full, free, and unreserved—there is something that bears witness to his sincerity, and to the earnestness of his convictions.”\*

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‘Cabinet Portraits,’ pp. 49, 54.



## PART III.

### CANDIDATES FOR THE LIBERAL LEADERSHIP.

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"Never in his Parliamentary career has either Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone exceeded himself in the vigorous ability displayed by each during the last session ; but, nevertheless, the facts remain that the one is in his sixty-ninth year, and the other in his sixty-fifth. Few unaccomplished facts are more certain than that Mr. Disraeli is now holding his last Premiership, and that with his next lease of power the final chapter of Mr. Gladstone's life as an English Prime Minister will be closed. Who is to take up the wand of power when it falls from the hands of these potent magicians?

"Looking first in search of answer along the Liberal benches we see six men whose prominence in debate suggests that amongst them is to be found the successor to Mr. Gladstone. Their names are the Marquis of Hartington, Mr. Forster, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Childers, and last, though, in the opinion of one person, not least, Sir W. Harcourt. The first five have, with more or less officiousness—less almost exclusively referring to the Marquis of Hartington—presented themselves to the House under circumstances which suggested to Mr. Lowther the happy description of them collectively as 'the Commissioners for executing the office of Leader of the Opposition.' It was curious to note early in the Session in what regular rotation Mr. Lowe, Mr. Forster, Mr. Goschen, and Mr. Childers assumed the functions of the absent Leader. Sometimes

the change was effected on alternate nights ; sometimes the Leadership was invested in one man for three successive nights. But the variation was inevitable, and Mr Disraeli was doubtless sincere in his expression of satisfaction during the debate on the Scotch Church Patronage Bill, when noting Mr. Gladstone's return, and seeing a prospect of the end of this condition of bewildering uncertainty. The phenomenon was not, however, without its special value, as affording an opportunity of observing the candidates engaged in a sort of rehearsal." \*

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 233.



### XIII.

## THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON.

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**T**HE American public, whose red flags and most forgotten offences of negro rebellion are quite forgiven and forgotten, has been seeing an English nobleman who displayed the Union Jack flying a Confederate flag in his own house, at a party entertainment, during the Christmas season. It came that on Mr. Gladstone's retirement the Liberal party had selected the Marquis of Hartington as its leader in the House of Commons. It recalled an important incident, and became a slight blow to the prestige of Parliament in American eyes. "Is it a true indication of a sample of the wisdom with which the education of the family is governed? We could hardly have found worse at Washington."

The news, however, proved true. "The choice of the Marquis of Hartington was made in a perfectly democratic

manner, by a regular caucus of Liberal Members of Parliament, with John Bright for chairman. It was just like a Democratic or Republican caucus in Washington, and the best man for the place was selected, without any regard being had to his rank or family connections. But it has been said that the new parliamentary leader is a man of the first rank but of second-class ability, which only proves that his party has no man of first class ability to act in the emergency. It is a very remarkable circumstance, however, and which shows how little change has been effected in the ruling classes of Great Britain during the past three hundred years, that the Marquis of Hartington, the leader of the Liberals in the House of Commons, and Earl Granville, the Liberal leader in the House of Peers, are near relatives, and descendants from that Liberal ancestor, William Cavendish, who was appointed by Henry the Eighth to take the surrenders of religious establishments when he despoiled the Church, and founded the great families by the bestowal of the confiscated property, whose descendants have been the virtual rulers of England up to the present time. The ancestor of the Marquis of Hartington knew how to take good care of himself; and the Duke of Devonshire, his descendant, besides being the wealthiest of English nobles, is also the patron of forty-five church livings.\*

"I doubt," says Justin McCarthy, "whether an American reader can have any accurate idea, unless he has specially studied the matter, and watched its practical operation in England, of the manner in which the influence of

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\* *New York Independent.*

the Peers makes itself felt through the political life of Great Britain. Americans often have some kind of notion that the aristocracy govern the country directly and despotically with the high hand of imperious feudalism. There is nothing of the kind in reality. The House of Lords is as a piece of political machinery, almost inoperative—as nearly as possible harmless. No English Peer, Lord Derby alone excepted, has anything like the political authority and direct influence of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, or Mr. Bright. There are very few Peers, indeed, about whose political utterances anybody in the country cares three straws. But, on the other hand, the traditional *prestige* of the Peers, the tacit, time-honored, generally-conceded doctrine that a Peer has first right to everything—the mediæval superstition tolerated largely in our own time, which allows a sort of divinity to hedge a Peer—all this has an indirect, immense, pervading, almost universal influence in the practical working of English politics. The Peers have, in fact, a political *droit du seigneur* in England. They have first taste of every privilege, first choice of every appointment. Political office is their pasture, where they are privileged to feed at will. There does not now exist a man in England likely to receive high office, who would be bold enough to suggest the forming of a Cabinet without Peers in it, even though there were no Peers to be had who possessed the slightest qualification for any ministerial position. The Peers must have a certain number of places, because they are Peers. The House of Commons swarms with the sons and nephews of Peers. The household appointments, the ministerial offices, the good places in the army and the church are theirs when

they choose—and they generally do choose—to have them. The son of a Peer, if in the House of Commons, may be raised at one step from his place in the back benches to a seat in the Cabinet, simply because of his rank. When Earl Russell, two or three years ago, raised Mr. Goschen, one of the representatives of the city of London, and a partner in a great London banking-house, to a place in the Cabinet, the whole country wondered: a very few, who were not frightened out of their propriety, admired; some thought the world must be coming to an end. But when the Marquis of Hartington was suddenly picked out of West End dissipation and made War Secretary, nobody expressed the least wonder, for he was the heir of the House of Devonshire. Indeed, it was perfectly notorious that the young Marquis was presented to office, in the first instance, because it was hoped by his friends that official duties might wean him from the follies and frivolities of a more than ordinarily heedless youth.”\*

The Right Honorable Spencer Compton Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington, is the eldest son of the seventh Duke of Devonshire, his mother being Lady Blanche Georgiana, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle. The title of Marquis is only a courtesy title, borne by him as heir of a Duke. He was born July 23, 1833; was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of B.A. in 1852, and that of M.A. in 1854. He was first chosen to Parliament for North Lancashire in 1857; and was afterward defeated by that constituency and returned for the Radnor borough, the previously returned member retiring to make room for him. In 1863 he was for a

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\* “Modern Leaders,” by Justin McCarthy, p. 13.

month a Lord of the Admiralty, and then for three years Under Secretary of State for War. In 1866 he became Secretary of State for War, and also Privy Councilor; in 1868 Post-Master General (under Mr. Gladstone), and in 1870, Secretary of State for Ireland. He retired from office with Mr. Gladstone in 1874. He is unmarried.

The Parliamentary critic of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, speaking of the earlier ministerial career of this gentleman, says:

"The Marquis of Hartington had none of the supercilious manner of Mr. Ayrton, but, equally with a colleague in whose companionship he must have joyed, his lordship possessed the art of making his audience thoroughly understand that, what with their questions, their objections, and their suggestions, they were decidedly obnoxious and altogether unnecessary people, and that if they would just leave the affairs of the department in the hands of him who, however unwillingly, addressed them, it would be a great deal better for the country. For their heir to a dukedom and revenues untold, the Marquis of Hartington was a most exemplary Member of Parliament, being constantly in his place in the House, and invariably at hand when the division bell rang, just as if he were a Paper or a Tadpole, or even a Right Hon. Nicholas Rigby. But he never spoke unless he were absolutely obliged, and then said as little as possible. There was a surliness about his manner that did not make him an attractive speaker; but then, as I have said, he is the eldest son of a duke, and on the whole was acceptable to the House of Commons, and even partially awed the Irish members." \*

"Throughout his career he has never said a striking thing

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 97.

and never done a bold one, following steadily the beaten path of official life, doing thoroughly, intelligently, and well the thing that lay to his hand. As a speaker he barely succeeded in commanding the attention of the House when his official position made his words momentous, and out of office he has, perforce, grown accustomed to speak before a beggarly array of empty benches. He invariably takes a common sense view of the question under discussion, but he never succeeds in making common sense attractive. He is one of those men with respect to whom it is, in the interest of a large number of our fellow-creatures, a matter of regret that he should have chanced to arrogate the rare position in life of a Duke's heir, for he was sure to have earned a comfortable living had he been born in circumstances that would have thrown him entirely on his own resources. In brief, the Marquis of Hartington is a hard-working, conscientious, stolid man, wearing all the polish he is capable of receiving from high education and social intercourse, but withal somewhat surly in manner, greatly impressed with the vast gulf that is fixed between a Marquis and a man to the despite of the latter, innocent of the slightest spark of humor, guiltless of gracefulness of diction, and free from the foibles of fanciful thought." \*

Mr. Wemyss Reid thus describes the personal appearance of the new Liberal leader :

"What does the spectator who looks at the Treasury Bench, whilst the House is sitting, see when his eye rests upon the Marquis of Hartington? He sees a rather good-looking man, of tall stature. He is quite young yet—far

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 252.

younger than any of his colleagues. But the handsome face has a worn, listless look that adds ten years to his apparent age. The eyes are downcast, the mustache droops heavily over the full and loosely-molded lips ; the man himself has the air of one who is hopelessly bored with the business of the State which is going on around him, and in which it is his lot to be so prominent an actor. And when my Lord Hartington rises to speak, the impression which he produces upon his hearers is hardly more favorable than that produced by his personal appearance. The tall young gentleman, to whom some awkward question has been put by a pertinacious Irish Member like the redoubtable Mr. Maguire, languidly gathers himself together when his tormentor has ceased, languidly rises from his seat, and languidly adjusts himself in a lounging attitude against the table of the House.

“ It is apparently more than this young nobleman of six-and-thirty years can do to support himself for half-a-dozen minutes without the aid of some substantial piece of furniture. When he has satisfactorily posed himself in this manner, the long white hand is seen to play for a moment listlessly with the thick brown beard, as though my Lord Marquis kept his ideas hidden somewhere in that appendage to his handsome face, and then a thick, guttural stream of words begins to pour forth from the lips, which are hardly opened in order to emit the sound. Listening attentively to the lazy drawl which seems to trickle down the speaker's beard, you get some faint idea that an answer is being given to the question that has just been put ; but you must be particularly quick of hearing in order to understand that answer. Possibly it is not during the

question-hour at all that the Marquis has risen. He may have been called upon for an exposition of some great State question, at a time when that question is attracting the earnest attention of Parliament. But there is no difference in the speaker's manner. There is the same indolent grace in the slouching attitude he adopts ; the same imperturbable self-possession in the manner in which he strokes and pats the thick brown beard ; the same cool indifference to everybody and everything in the tone in which he draws out his slipshod sentences.

"The nervous man trembles as he listens to the Marquis of Hartington whilst he is speaking. At every moment it seems that the stuttering, stammering, halting flow of words will come to a final stop ; and that the grievously over-taxed physical powers of the speaker will collapse altogether. But let no unaccustomed listener labor under any such apprehension. It is true that it is but 'a lumbering wain' of speech which Lord Hartington drives, but it is at any rate a sure one. The Marquis has far too keen a sense of the ridiculous to do anything so absurd as break down. He has, moreover, far too haughty a contempt for his audience to care to conceal from them his inability to construct smooth and flowing sentences to express his ideas. He can think on his legs ; and though his thoughts may not be very brilliant, such as they are he feels no hesitation about presenting them, in all their baldness and incoherency, to the first political assemblage in the world. But then, has he not taken the measure of that assemblage, as of everything else under the sun ? Has he not discovered that here, as well as elsewhere, nineteen-twentieths of the people are very ordi-

nary persons, who have a profound respect for a duke's son, and who are by no means quick to discern or resent his defects?

"The cynicism which is one of his characteristics is by no means assumed ; it is but the natural expression of the feelings of one who has tasted most pleasures, and made acquaintance with most men under the sun, and who finds pleasure and work, and fame and power, alike a weariness to the flesh and a 'vain vanity' to the spirit. Why should he then trouble himself to show the people who have not tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge that he possesses any of the qualities which they are accustomed to esteem? He need not display those qualities, he need not have them, in order to gain everything that it is possible for the most gifted of men to gain. Without showing either remarkable ability or remarkable industry, he finds himself not only a Member of Parliament, but a Cabinet Minister and the head of a great State department.\*

"Of so much importance do some men consider his presence in the House of Commons, that when he is defeated in fair fight in North Lancashire, one Mr. Green Price, member for the Radnor burghs, straightway commits political suicide in order to make way for him, and performs this tremendous act of self-sacrifice without hope of reward, and without, as he takes care to declare, having any personal knowledge of the Marquis.

"All other honors, moreover, which are the highest and exceptional rewards of great genius and great services, are his by right of birth. He has but to stretch out his hands

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\* [Written in 1870.]

in order to grasp them. Nay, at this very moment, many a shrewd political prophet would be ready to back the Marquis of Hartington for the premiership itself. Much more unlikely things have come to pass than that this languid young man should be called to the helm of affairs, the virtual rulership of the British Empire.

“Can we wonder, when we remember all these things, that the Marquis of Hartington, though he has been a Cabinet Minister in two administrations, should never have shown the capacity which might reasonably be looked for even in a subordinate member of a government? Let us not be too hard upon the Marquis. Few men would be able to resist the temptations of such a position as that which he occupies, and it is something to see the heir of the Duke of Devonshire submitting to the drudgery of late sittings in the House of Commons, to the annoyance of having to answer the absurd and impertinent questions of ‘cads,’ and to the wearing routine of office work. It would be too much—would it not?—to expect such a man, in addition to making these sacrifices for the sake of the public service, to condescend to increase the debt of gratitude owed to him by his country, by giving proof that he was not altogether destitute of the ability without which a man of the middle-class could never have climbed beyond an Under-Secretaryship or a Junior Lordship of the Treasury.

“We are not without a faint idea that this ability is not wanting in the heir of the great house of Cavendish. It certainly ought to be there if genius be hereditary, for Lord Hartington is the son of one of the ablest men and most accomplished scholars of his day; and he had the

great advantage, during the years of his nonage at Holkar Hall, of being under the direct tuition of his father. But if he does possess great ability, the young nobleman has achieved a remarkable success in his endeavors to hide it from the vulgar gaze.

“Flatterers will, of course, be ready to assure the public that the Marquis of Hartington is an administrator of tried skill, and that he possesses that statesmanlike capacity, that breadth of view, that soundness of judgment, without which no one can hope to succeed in the battle of life. And we must not accuse these men of deliberate lying. There is a form of that peculiar disease called color-blindness, which renders many persons, acute enough in every other respect, quite unable to see the blemishes and imperfections in the character of any one so lofty in station as the heir to a dukedom. The glamour of great rank surrounds the Marquis of Hartington, and nothing is more astonishing than the influence which that glamour has upon the world at large.

“To this nobleman have been intrusted in succession the duties involved in the charge of the War Office, of the Post Office, and of Irish Affairs. His present position \* appears to us to be that for which he is best fitted. He has some knowledge of Ireland, acquired by the actual possession of property in the island; he has the courage and self-control which are absolutely needed by any man who is brought much in contact with Irish politicians; and his personal independence makes him very careless about the assaults to which an Irish Secretary is

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\*[Written in 1870.]

constantly exposed. As Postmaster-General he was, of course, little more than a cipher ; and as Secretary for War he might not be worse, but he was certainly not better than his predecessors.

“ And yet it is impossible to deny that Lord Hartington has at least one great merit. He does not blunder. He may never do anything brilliantly ; may never display a spark of original genius of any kind ; but he is at least free alike from the awkwardness which generally distinguishes plebeian mediocrity, and from the rash impetuosity which is frequently allied to more brilliant talents.” \*

• It was noted as a promising circumstance that the first speech made in the House of Commons by the new leader was to deprecate the recognition of the new King of Spain. The Marquis of Hartington “ expressed the hope that Her Majesty would not recognize any government which did not meet the approbation of the Spanish people, which was a most liberal recognition of popular sovereignty for the heir of a dukedom to make.” A good political observer furthermore declares that popular opinion in England points to something like a revival of the old Whig party policy, under Lord Granville in the House of Lords and Lord Hartington in the House of Commons. “ The political history of the last forty years, if it is to repeat itself, points at something of the kind. After the old Reform Act a strong Radical government, which did great things, was followed in 1841 by a strong Tory government like the present. That was followed by a political lull under the man-

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\* “ Cabinet Portraits,” p. 93.

agement of the Whigs. Then came the new Reform Act, the late Radical government which did great things, and a strong Tory government which is now in power and likely to remain. If in the ordinary cycle of events we are to have a political lull under Whig management or its modern equivalent, we cannot have better managers than Lord Granville and Lord Hartington." \*

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\* *New York Nation*, Feb. 11, 1875 (London correspondence).



#### XIV.

### MR. FORSTER.

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**T**HREE years ago," wrote an English critic, in 1872, "the position of no man in the House of Commons was more enviable than that of Mr. Forster, Vice-President of the Council, and at that time still shut out of the sacred pale of the Cabinet. Writing of him at that date it fell to our lot to say that, 'There is no one amongst the junior members of the present Administration whose future is likely to surpass that which appears to lie before him. He has made for himself a most enviable position in Parliament, where he has succeeded in gaining not only the confidence of the leaders of his own party, but the esteem and respect of all his opponents.

"A staunch Liberal, a member of one of the most advanced, if not of *the* most advanced section of the Radical party, and a man whose unflinching devotion to his own principles does not require to be tested, he is nevertheless singularly popular amongst the Conservatives generally, and there is unquestionably no man now sitting on

the Treasury Bench who can command so favorable a hearing for any measure he has to propose from both sides of the House, as the right honorable gentleman whose Rabelaisian face forms one of the features of that post of honor.

“‘We may go further than this, and say that at the present moment, after Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Lowe, there does not seem to be any one on the Liberal side of the House who would be likely a few years hence to compete with Mr. Forster for the possession of the highest post in the Administration. It is no exaggeration—it is rather the carefully-formed opinion of the ablest critics—that the Member for Bradford is more likely than any other of those who are his compeers in parliamentary standing to attain the crowning honor of the Premiership. In short, Mr. Forster may be described as the most rising man in his party.’”\*

“Whether he will ever now be the Liberal leader is possibly open to doubt. To us it seems, however, that no other member of his party can hope to compete with him successfully. Compared with most of the men who might compete with him, he has on his side the crowning advantages of comparative youth and of popularity. He is still in the very prime of life, and he has succeeded in winning for himself a foremost place in the esteem and confidence of nearly all parties in the House of Commons. Under these circumstances we are inclined to think that men are not rash who express their belief that, if he is spared, the right hon. gentleman who now represents Bradford in the House of Commons will become Prime Minister of Eng-

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 232.

land. There is most assuredly no one in his own rank in Parliament whose chances of obtaining that distinction would be preferred to his. Much, of course, depends upon himself; but, judging by the past, we see no reason why in that future day, when those who are now at the head of affairs have departed, Mr. Forster should not appear as the leader of the new generation, and enter upon a far higher career of statesmanship than any which he has yet attempted." \*

Mr. Forster has a claim on American regard in view of his parentage, as well as for himself. He is the son of that William Forster of whom Whittier wrote :—

"The years are many since his hand  
Was laid upon my head,  
Too weak and young to understand  
The serious words he said.

"Yet often now the good man's look  
Before me seems to swim,  
As if some inward feeling took  
The outward guise of him."

In a note to this poem, the author thus sums up the brief history of this good man :—

"William Forster of Norwich, England, died in East Tennessee, in January, 1854, while engaged in presenting to the Governors of the States of this Union the address of his religious society on the evils of slavery. He was the relative and coadjutor of the Buxtons, Gurneys, and Frys, and his whole life, extending almost to threescore and ten years, was a pure and beautiful example of Christian benev-

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 242.

olence. He had traveled over Europe, and visited most of its sovereigns to plead against the slave-trade and slavery ; and had twice before made visits to this country under impressions of religious duty."

The Right Honorable William Edward Forster was born at Bradpole, in Dorsetshire, July 11, 1818. His mother was the sister of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart. He was educated at the Friends' School at Tottenham ; became a manufacturer in Bradford ; and married, in 1850, a daughter of the celebrated Dr. Arnold of Rugby. In 1861, he entered Parliament as Member for Bradford ; was Under-Secretary for the colonies from November 1865, to July, 1866 ; in December, 1868, was made one of the Charity Commissioners, and Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education, and also Privy Councilor. In 1870, he was the chief supporter of the new Education Bill, to which he ultimately gave such a form as to dissatisfy most of the dissenters. In 1871, he had similar charge of the Ballot Law. I remember well his appearance during a long and teasing series of debates upon amendments, in which he was constantly called upon to explain and defend the details of an elaborate bill, which was opposed and criticised from a dozen different points of view. It seemed to me an ordeal such as no American public man can possibly be called upon to undergo, so long as our Cabinet Ministers have no seats in Congress. Mr. Forster sat on the front Ministerial bench, his elbows on his knees, his head between his hands, as if he needed to grasp that organ firmly to keep the brain from utter bewilderment. Occasionally touched beyond endurance by some criticism from Sir William (then Vernon) Harcourt, he

would lift his head, spring to his feet, and stare with great excitement and apparent astonishment, "what chance any but a socialist has of getting elected here," then a strong feeling of indignation would take possession of him, and he would utter some words, and again retire to his place, and be again ignoring of the whole matter, and, perhaps, to the disgust of his friends and his fellow.

"How is it to come to pass," asks Henry Ford, "that Mr. Foster should take a position in Parliament, in spite of the intense dislike and opposition manifested there? Not as a party measure, as is sometimes the case, of our great governing families, to secure an increase in the wages and power of power of the British land and way of some thing else more. There is nothing any one in the House of Commons would do to give an undue advantage to any particular group of men." Mr. Foster. He is the son of a Minister of the Society of Friends, a gentleman who has distinguished himself as a writer by his works of practical benevolence, and who has shown himself an able literary man in his later years. He is, it is true, the son-in-law of Mr. Arnold, and Mr. Arnold's influence, as it might have been, might be need scarcely say, great in the estimation of the House of Commons. Mr. Foster is, to say the least, a very good person, a Yorkshire man, and a man of letters. His residence is in the very prettiest of the land, the residence of Mrs. Turner, who is devoted to painting and to gardening, and his place of business is in a famous street of London, a town with the reputation of being the seat of the President of the Christian Science movement. It can hardly be said, therefore, that it is the accident of birth or social influ-

ence that Mr. Forster owes the position he has gained in the political world. He is a Yorkshire mill-owner, and professes to be little more.

“Nor can it be said that it is to any remarkable gift of eloquence that he is indebted for the high rank he has already taken. Mr. Forster can hardly be said to be an eloquent man. His speeches, though they are usually clear and powerful, are not adorned by any rhetorical graces, nor are they lightened by any play of imagination. They are the plain unvarnished statement of honest opinions, arrived at after a due weighing of all sides of the question upon which those opinions have had to be formed. They have nothing of the literary beauty attaching to Mr. Bright’s orations, nor have they the elasticity, the grace, and the eloquence for which Mr. Gladstone’s speeches are remarkable.

“Mr. Forster was, moreover, a notable man in Parliament before he gained the opportunity of making a reputation as a statesman. Long ere he was allowed to introduce measures of his own, or to sit in the Cabinet, he had gained a place in the esteem of his fellow-members that was in every way enviable. It seems to us that it was to his general character and reputation, and to the marked ability he had shown in his criticisms on some public affairs, that he was indebted for this place.

“Before he had sat many years in the House of Commons, he had succeeded in establishing for himself not only a reputation for ability but for fairness. It was this eminent fairness and impartiality which did so much to gain for him that popularity which he now enjoys. His fairness was, however, something very different from the

cold-blooded judicial attitude assumed by Lord Derby, or the veneering of suavity worn by Lord Granville. It was rather the generous fairness of an outspoken English gentleman, who feels the utmost confidence in the perfect righteousness of his own views upon any and every subject, and who is prepared to maintain those views at all costs against all comers, but who has at the same time a gentlemanly respect and even liking for honest opponents, and who is quite ready to admit that, though his own views are the best, there may be something in the views of other people which deserves consideration.

“There is, in fact, a bluff and frank good-nature in the manner in which Mr. Forster deals with his opponents, which does more to conquer them than torrents of declamation or the most ingeniously designed strategy. The House of Commons, as a whole, rejoices as much in meeting a fair and generous opponent as any individual member would do, and accordingly Mr. Forster, who deals out to both sides of the House a courtesy, somewhat rough of speech, it is true, but always fairly divided between both parties, finds himself one of those enviable men who are popular with everybody.

“Before he had established a position for himself at St. Stephen’s, however, Mr. Forster held no mean place at Bradford, of which town he was one of the parliamentary representatives. The right honorable gentleman always speaks with something akin to enthusiasm when he mentions Bradford in the House of Commons, and Bradford returns the compliment by greeting him with overflowing enthusiasm whenever he appears in its midst for the purpose of addressing his constituents.

“It seems to us that the Yorkshire borough could hardly have a more suitable representative than Mr. Forster. The strong, sturdy common sense of the people of that district, their inherent love of fair play, their ambition, and their energy, are all fitly represented in Mr. Forster. It is a sight worth seeing when the right honorable gentleman addresses a meeting of his fellow-townsmen in St. George’s Hall, and it vividly recalls to mind the triumphs enjoyed by Mr. Bright whenever he makes his appearance in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, or the Town Hall at Birmingham. It is apparent the moment Mr. Forster appears upon the platform that the most perfect confidence and mutual good-will exists between member and constituents. The latter cheer him with a heartiness which speaks volumes on behalf of the soundness of their Liberalism and their lungs, and the former responds to the greeting he thus receives by making a speech in which he disburdens himself to his friends with a freedom and a frankness which must cause him to be the envy of more cautious statesmen.

“Let it not be supposed, however, that in the frankness which leads Mr. Forster to tell his constituents exactly what he thinks about the prospects of any particular policy in which his party is engaged, without regard to the consideration whether his opinions are likely to encourage his friends or the reverse, he ever falls into the mistake of saying too much. On the contrary, his very openness and frankness save him from the traps into which more cautious men are apt to fall. Thus Mr. Forster has never been known to reveal a ministerial secret prematurely. Indeed, when he became a member of the Government he told his consti-

uents, with the utmost straightforwardness, that they must not expect him to tell them everything; that he would tell them all that he could in fairness, but that there were certain topics upon which his tongue must henceforth be tied, and that much as he would like to speak upon these topics, he could not do so.

His constituents, being sensible Yorkshiremen, accepted this frank apology as a compliment rather than otherwise, and thus it is that Mr. Forster, though a member of the present Administration, and holding an important position in it, enjoys the delightful privilege of talking as freely as any independent member to his constituents upon most topics, and is allowed by them to say just as much or as little as he likes upon the other topics with which he is immediately concerned in his official capacity. His mode of securing this privilege by a frank confession of the disabilities under which a member of any Government necessarily labors, was a happy instance of the tact which has ever distinguished him throughout his public life." \*

The critic of the *Daily News*, however, pronounces Mr. Forster to be, in the highest sense of the word—the sense of Lord Halifax—a political Trimmer. He says that "Mr. Forster's Ministerial career has exhibited, the more threateningly because the germs of dangerous qualities are blended in him with great capacities and honorable aims, at least the first stage of this political decline. He is the chief Trimmer of modern politics. That is indeed the claim which in other terms is put forward on his behalf

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 234

to public confidence. We are told that it is his effort to produce measures which shall please both sides of the House. In other words, Mr. Forster has made the experiment of trying to serve two masters ; and the result is what has been predicted of all such efforts. Mr. Facing-Both-Ways is not the model for an English statesman. The English Elementary Education Act was a triumph of political trimming. The measure was framed to pass the two Houses of Parliament, and as a Liberal majority was secured by the quarter from whence it came, by the undue confidence placed in the Minister who had charge of it, and by the indisposition to embarrass the Government, Mr. Forster spent all his energies in conciliating the Conservative opposition. He was bent on making the measure acceptable to them, and to the majority in the House of Lords. He trimmed the boat to the Tory side. The navigation through Parliament was dexterously performed ; but the vessel constructed for that purpose has scarcely proved seaworthy. Already it has had to put in port for repairs, and, if we may judge from the suggestions which have been made, nothing more is contemplated than a little more trimming. The same qualities were displayed, though not so conspicuously, in Mr. Forster's conduct of the Ballot Bill.

“ It is Mr. Forster's fault as a statesman not to look beyond the House of Commons, or, at most, to enlarge his view only to the House of Lords ; to think too much of the passing of a measure, and too little of what it will prove to be when passed. Like some barbarous tribes, who sacrifice to the evil spirit because they feel that the benevolence of the good spirit is theirs already, Mr. For-

ster has neglected his Liberal friends for his Conservative adversaries. The administration of the Endowed Schools Act bears traces of this design to curry favor with the Opposition. The result is that, though Mr. Forster took office as one of the representatives of the Radical section of the Liberal party, he is now reckoned as the link between the Government and the Conservatives. It is said that if he is again returned for Bradford, it will be by Tory votes. Members who owe their seats to Tory votes cannot avoid paying the debt by a more or less Tory policy. They take their political complexion from their constituents, as some animals are said to change their color with that of the food they eat. Mr. Forster has, we hope, force of character and strength of conviction to avoid this catastrophe; but he is running great risk of it. In the meantime he has done not a little to disintegrate his party, and to substitute in Parliamentary contests the skirmishing of fortuitous bands, gathered from this side and from that, for the regular and organized warfare of rival parties, that is to say, of opposing convictions and principles. The resentment which these tactics have created is confined to a section of the Liberal party. The distrust which they have inspired is far more widely spread; and, unless it be dispelled by a different line of conduct, must affect for the worse Mr. Forster's political prospects and career.

"Sydney Smith long ago pointed out that it was Lord Russell's misfortune, with a simple and ingenuous character, to believe that he was endowed with a genius for intrigue. Many of the most serious errors of that eminent statesman's career are due to his own innocent conviction of his skill in finesse. Mr. Forster is in a similar danger

of sacrificing the better elements of his character to a certain, almost sinister, faculty of Parliamentary management." \*

"His speech in introducing the Education measure deserves to be noted as a masterpiece of clear and persuasive exposition. It followed but a few days after that wonderful address in which Mr. Gladstone made the intricacies of the Irish Land Bill as simple and intelligible as the multiplication table. Most men would have shrunk nervously from the comparison which could not fail to be suggested under the circumstances between the two speeches. Mr. Forster was not free from the nervousness ; but he, nevertheless, gave no chance to the most invidious critics to draw odious comparisons between himself and Mr. Gladstone. Without making the slightest attempt to secure oratorical effect, he quietly and deliberately stated to the House the provisions of his bill, in language which nobody could misunderstand. When he sat down it seemed for the moment that he had achieved one of the greatest parliamentary triumphs of modern times. Everybody was captivated by his exposition of the measure, and on the one side of the House leading members of the Conservative party, and on the other influential Radicals, joined in congratulating Mr. Forster upon the masterly manner in which he had solved the great problem of the day.

"We know that since then some of his own friends have seen fit to alter their opinions, and that the views taken by a section of the Liberals with regard to Mr. Forster's bill have been considerably modified under pressure from with-

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 205.

out. Still this does not alter the fact that in the first instance his proposals were hailed as the most successful attempt to settle the educational difficulty which had ever been made, and that the speech in which those proposals were stated was of itself a model of lucid and simple exposition. He conducted the subsequent parliamentary skirmishes on the question with tact, temper, and discretion. As for Mr. Forster's future, it seems to us that the more his present position is studied the more brilliant will that future seem."\*

Mr. Forster visited America last year, and made an extended tour through the United States. In the latter part of his visit, he had a reception from the Union League Club of New York, on the evening of December 15, 1874. The address of the presiding officer, Joseph H. Choate, Esq., contained an excellent *résumé* of Mr. Forster's service to this country during the Civil War. Some extracts from this speech follow :

" You are all too familiar with the events of those days to have forgotten the part which our distinguished guest then took in Parliament as the Member for Bradford. It is no flattery to say that he acted always as the steadfast friend of his own country and of ours, and demonstrated that the two characters were not incompatible. I may not, in his presence, detail all that he said and did in the line of this policy. Let two or three instances suffice. In the early part of 1862, when a violent pressure was brought to bear upon his Government to attempt a breach of the blockade by which our navy had already successfully invested the Southern ports, he disputed in the House of Commons the alleged inefficiency of the blockade, and demonstrated by the very facts and arguments which were brought

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 246.

to bear against it that it had been wonderfully effective from the beginning. He argued that the strict observance of a genuine neutrality was all that could save England from a more deplorable war than any other in which she could engage; a war in which, to use his own words, 'she would have to fight for slavery and against her own kinsmen.' This view happily prevailed. The Government declared against the proposition, and so England was saved from a gross injustice and America from a disaster which would have been irreparable. A little later in the same year, when defeat and disaster covered our arms, when Washington was in greater danger than Richmond, and the commercial prosperity of England was checked, and her great cotton mills stopped by the progress of the war, a bold attempt was made in Parliament to induce the British Government to offer mediation. He then insisted that such an offer would be unjustifiable in the position as it then stood, and would justly be regarded as an affront by our Government; that England's true interest was that the war should end as speedily as possible, and that such a step on her part would only embitter and prolong it. He contended that slavery was the true cause of the war, and expressed his conviction that the war would end in its extermination, although he could not see exactly how that desired end would be brought about. It is not a little remarkable that when this prophetic hope was asserted on the other side of the Atlantic our own Government, though near in time, was not yet quite so near in purpose to its realization. On almost the very day on which it was uttered, President Lincoln sent a Message to Congress with the draft of a bill, the plan of which was to compensate any State which might abolish slavery within its limits, by issuing to it United States six per cent. bonds at so many dollars a head for all the slaves so freed. And it was not till six months afterward that the hope of history was realized by the actual publication, on the 1st of January, 1863, of the proclamation that declared all slaves to be freemen thenceforth and forever. From the very outbreak of our troubles our friend demanded of the Government a strict enforcement of its Foreign Enlistment act, to prevent rebel cruisers from being built and equipped in England, and sent forth for the destruction of our commerce;

and if he and those who stood with him could have had their way, no Confederate flag would have found its way out upon the ocean. The *Alabama*, the *Florida*, and the *Shenandoah* would have been tied fast until the end of the war to the British docks, where they were built or equipped, and the war itself would have been thereby shortened by many months or years. In March, 1863, when exhorting the Government to increased vigilance in preventing the escape of new cruisers which were already projected, he used the argument so characteristic of a Christian statesman, that England should do as she would be done by, and, he added, as America had always done by her, and in that connection he cited two instances of the fidelity of our Government in that regard—the case of the *Russian Admiral* and the *Maury*—and it may not be uninteresting to him to know that the great American shipbuilder and the eminent American merchant to whom he referred in that debate, as illustrating the fact that American subjects would not break their own neutrality laws, are present with us this evening to do him honor. We have to be thankful that he was by no means alone in these efforts. John Bright was always with him, shoulder to shoulder. The aggregate of these friendly influences was sufficient to restrain the Government from any overt acts against its declared neutrality, and there is good reason to believe that we had more friends than we knew, not only in Parliament, but in the Government, and that that gracious lady, the Queen herself, was wholly averse to anything which tended to a breach of friendship with America. \* \* \* \*

"But I should be false to this occasion, gentlemen, if I did not, in conclusion, call your attention to another totally different subject, in regard to which our eminent friend is entitled to grateful recognition whenever the English language is spoken. I mean for his whole-souled devotion to the great cause of education. Since, in this country, education has been the one great interest underlying and overshadowing all the rest from the day when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth until this hour, since its success is the measure and the standard of our national strength and prosperity; since the different regions and sections of this great Republic take rank exactly like children in the schools according to the fidelity with which they

have cherished it, we cannot, as Americans, afford to leave it out of the estimate of that tribute which we are paying to-night. Our guest was the father and the champion of that great measure, so vital to the welfare of England—the Elementary Education bill—which was introduced and carried through in the Session of 1870, having for its object—as its name implies—to secure elementary education to all the children of England. No man who pretends to be educated ought to be unfamiliar with that long series of speeches in the House of Commons, by which Mr. Forster, as the member of Parliament having that bill in charge, advocated and carried it through. How he demonstrated that upon its speedy passage depended the industrial prosperity, the constitutional system, and the national safety of England. How, in an almost unparalleled debate of twenty-one days, he contended for its passage—answering all questions, settling all doubts, silencing all opposition; so that, when at last it had received the royal assent, every child in England could fairly thank him for having secured to it at least the sure foundation of an education.”

Mr. Forster’s speech was so interesting and important—as being the first elaborate statement ever made, on American soil, by a leading English statesman, of the political relations between the two countries—that it will be given in full :—

“MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN : I have often had occasion to lament that want of power of expression which has accompanied me through life, and I have often wondered why it is I ventured to take part in public affairs, but I never regretted it so much as I do this evening. I know of no time in the history of my life, in which there was such an occasion for me to be eloquent, and yet, alas ! eloquent I cannot be. I can only say that I never was so embarrassed, I may say overpowered, with kindness as by the kindness of your reception this evening. I try to imagine that it is not to myself personally, and yet the eloquent and kind remarks of the President almost make me think that it, to some extent, is a personal welcome that you are

giving me. (Applause.) And I will say that when this invitation was first extended to me I thought that really I should not accept, that it would hardly be fitting so to honor me, but I supposed that I should not readily decline any meeting in which the good feeling of Americans to Englishmen, even though to one of her least conspicuous statesmen, would be thus evinced. I must not merely thank you for your great kindness, but as I am about leaving your shores in two days, I am glad to be able, in this meeting, to say one word of the great kindness with which I have been received throughout your great country. It was not merely courtesy to myself; that I should have expected, for the character the Americans have for courtesy would have secured that I should be thus treated where I was known. But there are mischief-makers who, sometimes from recklessness and sometimes from malice, try, on both sides of the Atlantic, to represent that there is some ill-feeling between the two countries and between the two peoples, and, therefore, I am glad to take this opportunity of saying that, from Boston to the Rocky Mountains, and from Niagara to New Orleans, I never heard one mention of my country that an Englishman would not like to hear. (Applause.) Well, sir, you have alluded to the facts connected with your great struggle, with your great rebellion. I will myself hardly allude to them. You have stated with great generosity your opinion that, as time goes on, history will prove both to Americans and to Englishmen, that you had in that great crisis more friends in our country than perhaps at the time you supposed. I think you will find, as you get to know more of the actual facts, I think you will find what was really the case, that both the people and the Government of England were your steadfast sympathizers and friends. (Applause.) You stated, sir, and stated with great truth, that there were men in our country who could not help being your friends in that great struggle; that the Abolitionists, the old anti-slavery men, well knew what that struggle meant, and indeed I may say that I, as an enemy of slavery from the time that I could first read a book or listen to words spoken on the subject—that I should have been utterly without excuse if I had not the knowledge to see what was the real meaning of the terrible contest in which you were engaged. (Applause.) I

had the knowledge that there was never any struggle out of my country, I don't know that there was ever any struggle anywhere, in which I felt so intensely interested as in your great Civil War.

"There never was a war upon which depended a greater stake, in which the issue was more important. History, I believe, will declare it was the war of this century, of this age. What were the great results? What were the great stakes at issue? There was the preservation of your great Union; there was the abolition of this terrible evil of slavery. What would have happened if you had not succeeded? Why, your Union would have been broken up. You would have had in America, as we have in Europe, countries with large standing armies, combinations, complications, and difficulties, frontiers constantly, jealously, watching each other, constantly trying—and that is what I always endeavor to remind men in England—constantly trying to drag the nations of Europe into some difficulties on one side or the other. And as regards slavery, slave power would have been dominant over a large portion of your fair country, and in fact we would have been put back in the progress of civilization for many, many years. (Applause.) What would have been the results? There never was a war waged for a greater stake: there never was a war with greater results. These results may be summed up almost in two words—slavery abolished in the United States, and by that abolition doomed to destruction elsewhere—and your nation saved not only from that assault, but saved, as I fully believe, forever. (Applause.)

"No one who traveled over your country—no one can read her history—no one can see how you are united together by every tie of liberty, of interest and of blood, without saying that nothing but the destruction, the influence of such a tremendous evil as slavery would promote disunion. These were facts which I knew before I came to America. I knew what an important war it had been, and how great the stake and how great the results; but I confess that traveling in your country has made me realize more even than I did when I was reading the daily accounts that reached me during the struggle—has made me realize more completely what a terrible war it was. I doubt whether there ever was a civil war, or any war

which was waged with greater destruction of life on each side, with greater suffering, and I may say with greater courage, greater heroism, greater endurance. And when I say that I don't say on one side only, for your fellow-countrymen of the South showed that they were Americans, showed, I might say, that they were of English descent. (Applause.) We know the courage with which they fought was wasted on a wrong side; it was expended in what was indeed a bad cause, but they did not think so. They were in rebellion because of the circumstances that surrounded them. There was such a fate and destiny hanging over them, and these men who were fighting against the Union, and fighting for slavery, thought, as they told me in the South, that they were fighting for their firesides. But not only was the war waged one of the greatest wars in the world for the valor and heroism with which it was waged, but there is another fact that is brought home to me by the short visit I have paid you, and that is there never was a civil war which, I fully believe, has left less hatred and less rancor behind it (applause); less hatred between the victor and the vanquished, less hatred between the freedmen and their masters. I don't say that there is absolutely no ill-feeling or ill-will left on the part of any of the men in the South, or that what happened to the men in the North has been entirely wiped out of their memories; but I do say this to the credit of our common race, there was never a contest that we can find anywhere but in itself—no civil war for any length of time prosecuted, that has left so little of a feeling of hatred on the part of the combatants, and has made it so easy for them now to unite together, and to be, as the President said, one country, hardly remembering their difficulties. (Applause.) I was introduced last week by a Federal General to a Confederate General, on the floor of the House. I heard, as I went through the country, men who had been fighting in different camps talking over the battles in which they had been opposed to each other, and in fact I was always told that if there was any difficulty or disagreement left it was not between those who fought, but rather between those who had not fought. (A laugh.)

"Well, Sir, then as regards the master and the slave, I do not deny that you have a terrible problem—a most difficult problem—before

you ; the problem of dealing with the freedman and considering what the antecedents of slavery are, what slavery made him—aye, what slavery made his master. The problem of having to deal with these men in their new condition is one that may well call for all the forbearance and all the wisdom of the Government, and politicians, and people. And even then, although I do not mean to say that you have not difficulties in the present ; that you have not difficulties, perhaps, in the immediate future ; yet, even then, you ought to be full of hope, for great is the progress of the past. I am not here to tell you what you yourselves know so much better than I do. It would be presumptuous on my part to put before you the little experience I have learned in this short and hasty tour I have made through your country, but I must say that going down to the South with the most intense interest in the fate and the condition of the freedmen, I have come from it with a great feeling of hopefulness, in spite of every difficulty there may be at the present, and in spite of every disturbance we sometimes hear of and lament over, that you will be really able to solve that problem.

“ One or two little things which I noticed in the South impressed me very favorably ; and though they may not be new to you, they were details which very deeply impressed me. I went to a sugar plantation near New Orleans, and there I found only two changes. One change was—the slaves were free. But there I saw two women and a man working, and a white man walking down the canes. He was their foreman now ; he had been their overseer. He said that the freedmen and the freedwomen, whom he had in the times of slavery to drive to work with the lash, cheerfully earned their \$30 a month, with rations, for the men, and 75 cents a day for the women, with rations. That is a fact you may set up against all you hear from Vicksburg—and the Returning Board of New Orleans. (Laughter.) Then again there was another little fact. I only mention it among thousands of such facts. In a place in which, a few years ago, it would have been a crime to teach any colored person to read, we went to an excellent colored school, and the parents came with the children, and we asked how many

of these had been slaves, and we ascertained that almost every one of them had been. And again, we asked how many had little bits of land, and a large proportion of them, we found, had little bits of land. There again is progress in the past that shows how really you are working out the problem, and I believe, if I may be allowed to say it, that all that is wanting now is to leave matters very much to themselves, and you will find the whites and blacks, the masters and their slaves, will accustom themselves to the new state of society, to the new position of the laborer. There remains this most important fact—a fact which is of importance to us as well as to you. Contrary to the experience of the West Indies, the actual amount of produce raised in the South, the actual crops that have been taken from the soil, including cotton, rice, and tobacco, is as great as it was before the abolition of slavery. Well, I must not detain you with any extended remarks. (Cries of "Go on, go on.") I will only mention one other fact that came before me when I was there. Whenever I could, I heard your oratory—never missed a speech, if I could possibly help it, and I heard one eloquent gentleman responding to a welcome which was conveyed, not as conveyed to me to-night, but in the form of a serenade. I cannot repeat his speech; but there was one sentence in it which struck me very much. He was returned, I believe, by the Democratic Party; at any rate, he was a favorite of the Democratic Party, and so he spoke from their point of view, I suppose. But, describing what he hoped would be their future policy, he described what I believe is the policy of every patriot, be he Democrat or Republican or of any other party throughout this great country. He said that policy was 'peace between the sections; peace between the races.' (Applause.) Well, may I add one other word to that—peace between you and us—(applause)—and not peace merely, but friendship and fraternity among all English-speaking communities.

"Now, I took an intense interest in your war. I earnestly desired that the rebellion should be put down, not merely because I believed that it was for the good of your people, but also because it was for the good of civilization, for the good of England, and for the

good of all countries that the Union should be preserved not merely because I hated slavery and longed to see it abolished, but because I had no other aspiration so deep-seated as the desire for an Anglo-American alliance, and while slavery existed that alliance was almost impossible. How could any such alliance exist when there was this disagreement between the two Governments, and between these two countries. Let me say a word or two upon this alliance, because I believe a great many of you desire it as much as I do, and I think it is of the utmost importance that we should thoroughly express what we mean by it. It is not from a feeling of self interest, or from a feeling of fear of your power, however great it may be; it is not from fear of war between us and you, if by that is meant the fear of your defeating us, that has caused me to have a feeling so strong in favor of this alliance. In one respect I have a fear of war between you and us, and you also have that fear with us. I say it is not from fear of your power, for who is bold enough to say that if these two countries, inheriting one prowess and one ancestry, and inheriting the endurance and determination not to allow themselves to be defeated, with all their resources and all their courage, should go to war, which of them at the end of that fierce struggle would come out the conqueror. But I fear war, as you fear it, because it would be a civil war, and you know what civil war means. War between us and you would really mean civil war. It is not merely that we are kinsmen by our common ancestry, but that kinship is being constantly renewed. There are thousands upon thousands of men in almost every one of your cities that have their relations in our country, and there is scarcely any one of our towns that has not got a kinsman here. I can well recollect when I was addressing my constituents at the time of your civil war, saying that we owed justice to a foreign country, and then catching myself up and saying, 'this is not a foreign country, for I should like to know how many of you there are present that have got relations in America,' and there was almost half of the audience jumped up in response. I may say this, because when I said it was not fear of war that made me desire an Anglo-American alliance, I stated that we do not fear a civil war between us. But it is no calculation of self-interest, nor any mere fear

of war that has induced that strong desire for this alliance in the minds of many of us—I may say in my own mind certainly, and I believe there are many who have the same feeling. But it is the belief that you and we together, that your Government and our Government, that your commonwealth and our commonwealth might together influence the world, might together lead Christian nations in the path of progress, and might together try to teach and civilize the weaker nations to tread that path. (Applause.) I am told that this is a wild sentiment of ours, that these are unmeaning phrases, or a threat to other nations. I claim to be a practical politician. If I have had any success whatever in political life, it has been because I tried to hold fast to all practical matters. It is just because I am a practical politician that I have earnestly desired that you and we together may help one another in so putting into practice the same principles of freedom and of order, that by the power of our success we may induce other nations to follow our example and so pervade other people that they may persuade, nay force, their Governments to follow that example, and to disband those vast standing armies which keep back civilization and threaten the peace and prosperity of the world.

“ Now take, for instance, that arbitration matter at Geneva. I do not know that that is a popular thing to talk about here. (Laughter.) I believe you think you did not get half enough money, and I know it is not very popular either in our country. You know when a man pays out money he thinks he pays too much, while the man who receives the money generally thinks he ought to get more. But, however that may be, be it popular or not at present, I may say here what I never shrunk from saying in England, either in Parliament or out of it, that I struggled hard for that arbitration, that I earnestly desired that that matter should be sent to arbitration, and when there was some possibility that it might fall off on account of some things that were said here which I will not allude to to-night, I clung to it, determined that if possible it should go on. And I tell you simply the reason why I did so. I won't go into that question of the claim, or how far you were right and how far you were mistaken in thinking we were so wrong as you supposed. Undoubtedly it was

a case in which lawyers could on each side debate indefinitely. But the one reason I allude to to-night is that I was very much struck by a description of it I saw in one of your principal papers a few days ago—a description which seemed to be rather approved of by your paper—and that was a description by that eminent European statesman, Señor Castelar, who described it as a 'sublime humiliation. I am proud of that sublime humiliation. (Applause.) But I do not know that I should be proud of it if I thought it was a humiliation at all. I have no fear whatever that history will quickly pass the same verdict, and that in both our countries it will very speedily be popular, although it may not be at this moment. A lawsuit is not liked, but a lawsuit is better than fisticuffs on any occasion. But the ground upon which I struggled for it was this, that, having, with all its difficulties, got that dispute between us to arbitration, having, with all its difficulties—and they were not few—kept that arbitration going till we came to the decision, it will be uncommonly difficult for anybody, any Government on either side, however much it may wish it, or any mischief-makers on either side, however powerful they may be—I say it will be very difficult for them in future to bring up a war between our two countries without an arbitration being first tried. And then again, I do rejoice that the first successful trial, upon a great and important occasion, which I believe this to have been, of arbitration as a settlement of a dispute between two great countries, should have been by England and America, and that we should have set the example to the rest of the world. Well, I dare say I shall be told, what is the use of your talking so much about this alliance between the two countries, because when Americans get to live some time in America they become very different from Englishmen, and Englishmen are very likely changed from what they were when Americans left England, and this itself will be sufficient to keep up disagreement. I believe, if any one holds that opinion, it is a very great mistake. There are differences, but it appears to me they are differences in appearance rather than in reality.

"Let me just give you my experience in coming to you. I honestly confess that on the first day or two I was struck with the differ-

ence between your country and ours. But after that day or two it seemed altogether to disappear. And I have not been able to fancy that I have not been in my own country. Then you may talk of the differences in the Governments. Well, there is a difference in the form of the Government, but it is curious how we get at the same end, and how we have the same object, and how there are the same principles in our two Governments. I have been spending a week in Washington, and I have been most kindly allowed to see as much as it was possible to see of the machinery of your parliamentary government, and I must confess that at first sight there seemed to me there was a very great difference. I was aware of one very remarkable difference which I should find out. That which with us is a ministry, ceases to be a ministry as soon as the majority of the country have declared against the party to which it belonged, but with you it lasts as long as the President chooses to keep it in power. (Laughter.) I was aware of that difference, and I am also aware that with your institutions, which I need not go into now, especially as you know them so much better than myself, that it would be difficult—scarcely possible—to make a change in that respect. But I was not prepared to find out this fact, that your members of your House of Commons, if I may be allowed to call your House of Representatives your House of Commons, remain in power and remain members long after they have been turned out. I have great pleasure in witnessing the deputies in your House assembled and transacting the public affairs, but I found out that two-thirds of the gentlemen I had the pleasure of seeing had second selves waiting for their seats, who were ready to take their places, and who, like the Peri in the poem, were looking in at the Elysium within, but still kept out. Upon going home, if I come across my old colleagues, I can explain to them how very different would have been their position here, and how premature, from an American point of view, our hasty and precipitate action last year would have been. I believe you have a very good reason for this difference, for it seems to me it is your way of bringing in the Conservative element in affairs, which I suppose would be necessary in any popular Government. The principle of both countries is that the will of the people

should be desired. There is a tendency to suppose that we are a united and homogeneous people, and that we are a united and homogeneous people. But we are not. We are a people of many nations, many languages, many religions, many customs, many habits, many opinions, many interests, many passions, many prejudices, many prejudices, many prejudices. We are a people of many nations, many languages, many religions, many customs, many habits, many opinions, many interests, many passions, many prejudices, many prejudices, many prejudices. We are a people of many nations, many languages, many religions, many customs, many habits, many opinions, many interests, many passions, many prejudices, many prejudices, many prejudices.

Well, we talk about the difference in the form of government. You have a republic, the United States, and we have not. You have colonies growing up to be our equals, but we have not. You are joining in the common allegiance to our queen, and we are not. You are stupid—that is to say, the lesson you taught us about colonies a hundred years ago we have to some extent learned, and we have learned it to such an extent that we have made it very hard on our colonies to leave us. Whether under President or Sovereign, whether choosing, as you do, your first Magistrate from term to term, or proud, as we are, of our loyalty to our beloved Queen, (Applause,) yet you and we together, whether American citizens or British subjects, are citizens of a commonwealth whose principle of government is that it is a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people. And who are the English-speaking communities through the world? Well, it is hard to make the answer to that question without appearing invidious. We can fancy it would appear like boasting to describe the vast extent of the temperate regions that English-speaking peoples possess, and we hope that added numbers of our race will fill them before long, while the old islands, not yet exhausted, still send forth their emigrant population. These English-speaking communities, therefore, possess a large portion of land here, as I say, governments as to form, the same principles; they have the same feelings, the same passions, the same temptations. The Ganges which flows from the Himalayas

very much the same dangers that beset us in England. And, whatever they may be, I have hoped for your future as I have hoped for our future. There is this great similarity between you and us, that if an Englishman comes to the States, and if an American goes to England, if he was to believe half that is said, he would not be very hopeful for the future. But I disbelieve almost everything I have heard. I am inclined to say to those who are despondent, it lies with yourselves to neutralize your own predictions. The only thing you want, if I may be excused for telling you, is that your men of station and culture should not be satisfied with criticising, but they should take part in the government of their country.

"I see as I go through your States—and I have been doing so at an interesting time, as you have just been having your elections—I see places where men of position and influence are coming forward who have not done so up to this time, and who feel that patriotism calls on them to take their part in the Civil Government of their country, just as in the war they so nobly responded to the call of duty. Well, if we have the like facilities and the like temptations, we have also the like aspirations and the like objects. Aims which we do in a measure fulfill, and aspirations which we in a measure attain to. We and you revere the law, and are determined to preserve order. We and you are determined to protect the rights of property, and are striving to secure the fulfillment by property of its duties. We and you are determined that no priest or potentate shall stand between our Creator and ourselves. We are both of us anxious to replace war by arbitrations, and defense, not defiance, is our motto. Would that I could add that we are determined to have free trade and untrammelled commercial intercourse. (Applause.) But that will come. (A laugh.) I was very glad to hear that Mr. Hewitt said he looked forward to the time when he would be a free-trader, but that the difficulty of having free trade was that labor was cheaper with us, and that as soon as labor would be as dear in England as it is here it would come. We have made the laboring man far better off than he was, and we intend to make him still better off than now. But the way to make the laborer better off is to have the most perfect freedom of commercial intercourse.

"There is one other point in which we may lead one another, and

that is made to the western world, we are doing a great work for the  
negroes and Indians, and we are doing it in the most effective way  
in the world. This is a great work, and it is a work that is  
is for us now to work together and to continue to work together.  
is hardly any more more numerous than in the past, and we are  
our best against the world, and we are doing it in the most effective way  
study the situation in which the world stands in the present and  
Pacific. A few years ago we were doing a great work for the  
for assistance in the world, and we are doing it in the most effective way  
assistance, and we are doing it in the most effective way. We are doing  
their duty in this matter. I am doing it in the most effective way.  
I expected by these means to be able to do it. I am doing it in the most effective way.  
I must beg you, however, to do it in the most effective way. I am doing it in the most effective way.  
your great country, peace between our States and our people, and  
virtue to your substance, so that they may be able to do it. I am doing it in the most effective way.  
over all classes and nations, make government good, and give  
your wide borders, North and South and West, and make it so  
that your Government shall wield its might power to do good to  
the world. And I am hardly so done without giving especial  
thanks to the club, Sir, for their kindness, overpowering as it has  
been to me, in giving me the opportunity not only to meet its mem-  
bers but so many of its distinguished citizens. And in doing so,  
perhaps, I may take the name of your club as an omen for the future.  
This Union League Club, I am told, was formed in dark hours of  
danger, to bind together loyal Americans in support of your glorious  
Union against the assaults of the slave power. May it be the type  
and forerunner of another Union League, of a close alliance between  
the United States and England, and all English-speaking commu-  
nities, of a friendship between our Governments, and that you and  
we together may influence the world by proving how great are the  
blessings of popular government, when individual self-control pre-  
vails among the people; and depend upon it, neither you nor we will  
be able to promote liberties abroad, to protect the liberties of others,  
or even to preserve our own liberties if either of us should allow this  
individual self-control to fade from among us. (Applause.) \*

\* *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1874.



## XV.

### MR. LOWE.

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**T**HE personal appearance of Mr. Lowe is thus described by the author of "Cabinet Portraits :"

"No one who has ever spent an afternoon in the lobby, or an evening in the House of Commons, can be unacquainted with his physical characteristics. His big, burly figure, precisely the figure one associates with Farmer Brown and the ownership of fields of growing wheat ; his purplish-pink face, redeemed from the charge of a common place vulgarity by a forehead which has a massive grandeur of the rarest kind ; his silvery white hair, that has been white from his birth ; his weak eyes perpetually blinking and hiding themselves from the light of the sun ; the short, quick step with which he walks ; the uneasy roll of his great head upon his shoulders, calling to mind a similar performance to be seen any day at the bear-pit of the Zoological Gardens ; the harsh but not unpleasant voice, which it seems impossible to raise above the

level of conversation ; the nervous little laugh which ever and anon bursts from his throat ; once seen or heard, these things can never be forgotten.

“And, looking at Mr. Lowe nowadays, it is hard to conceive how men could ever have failed to read the signs of an extraordinary and original genius in his personal appearance, and in the little tricks and weaknesses of manner which we have indicated. For in this strange, uncouth man, who, as he walks the streets, is perpetually singing or talking softly to himself ; who always appears to be living in another world to that in which those around him move ; and who at times appears to be altogether oblivious to the commonplace events passing before his eyes, nothing is so remarkable as the impression of power which he produces upon those who study his appearance. He has the head and frame of a Roman emperor, and the painter who wanted a model for a portrait of Nero could hardly do better than copy the likeness of the Member for the University of London.” \*

“The Right Honorable Robert Lowe was born in 1811 at Bingham, in Nottinghamshire. He is the son of the late Rev. Robert Lowe, then the Rector of Bingham, by Ellen, the second daughter of the late Rev. Reginald Pynnder, Rector of Madresfield, in Worcestershire. Having received the rudiments of his education at Winchester, he was removed thence in due course to the University of Oxford, where he was entered as a student of Magdalen. In 1833 he graduated as B.A. with high honors, being first-class in classics, and second-class in mathematics. It was

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\* “Cabinet Portraits,” p. 39.

in 1836 that he took his degree as M.A., but the year prior to that he had been elected a Fellow of Magdalen. His fellowship he held, however, for scarcely one twelvemonth, in consequence of his marrying, in 1836, Georgina, the second daughter of George Orred, Esq., of Aigburth House, near Liverpool.

“Settling in Oxford for some years, he there obtained considerable eminence as a private tutor, coaching in the academic curriculum, with the skill of maturity, many who were as nearly as possible of his own age; and that so effectually, that more than one among them has since attained, thanks in no small degree to the influence of his instruction, distinction among his own immediate contemporaries. Having applied himself by preference, however, to the study of the law, he threw up his professional engagements in tuition at the University, shortly after the Hilary Term of 1842, having during that time been called to the bar at Lincoln’s Inn on the 27th of January. His intention, nevertheless, was not to practice as a barrister in England; for in that same year, 1842, he took his departure from this country to the antipodes, settling down, as it appeared for some time, as a permanent resident in Australia. There, in fact, he remained for about eight years altogether.

“Within a year after his arrival in the colony he obtained a seat in the Council, a seat which he continued to hold uninterruptedly for seven years, namely, until 1850, the date of his return homewards. Two years before that date, however, the Hon. Robert Lowe had, in 1848, been elected as Member for Sydney to the Colonial Parliament.

“Returning to England, as we have said, in 1850, two

years after that—it was on the 8th of July, 1852—he was successful in obtaining an entrance into a far grander arena, one worthier of his powers as a debater, and, we will now hope, yet more of his capacities as an administrator—the ex-Member for Sydney gaining admission then for the first time to the House of Commons as M.P. for the borough of Kidderminster. His maiden speech, delivered not very long after his entrance into the House, we ourselves perfectly well remember hearing—remember, as the phrase is, as though it were but an incident of yesterday. His Australian reputation had preceded him : added to which he had, already, since his return homewards, within that brief interval, acquired another and a wholly distinct reputation—the reputation of a journalist. Immediately upon his rising, amidst eager cries of ‘New Member,’ there ensued—what is most unusual when merely a new Member rises—a really breathless silence, one of those momentary pauses when, as the absurd expression is, ‘You might have heard [which you couldn’t possibly] a pin drop.’

“Directly afterwards—when the Member for Kidderminster had begun speaking—there were whispered words here and there faintly audible about the House, in explanation of this silence, words of tribute less to the man than to the great organ of which he was regarded as the representative—‘*Times! Times!*’ It was far rather as the supposed representative of the *Times* than as simply the representative ‘*soi-disant*’ of Kidderminster that Mr. Lowe was, at that first moment of his appearance before us, an object of such eager curiosity and expectation. And his appearance itself had unquestionably something to do with the peculiar interest which was at once, at the instant of

his rising, awakened. Regarded from a distance he probably appeared to be a hale old man far advanced in years, with the silvery hair of an octogenarian. Regarding him near at hand, one could not but recognize at once in the whitened head and ruddy countenance peculiarities of constitution, and not the effects of time, the honorable Member being then, in point of fact, only just turned forty.

“As a maiden speech, that address of his, when for the first time speaking before the House of Commons, was in every way remarkable. It was clear, cogent, full of information, sinuous and elastic in the sequentially linked chain of its argument, audible in every syllable throughout the whole House, without an effort on the part of the speaker himself in his delivery, and evidencing from first to last the most admirable self-possession. It was a success. It was more than that, it was a success at once easy and brilliant. The House took to the new member—appreciated him almost, as it were, by an instinct, for the subject afforded him but moderate opportunities for the display of the resources of his oratory—was in harmony at once with his abilities, not with his opinions, for which it more or less, even then, as it has mostly ever since, betrayed in effect a sort of general antagonism—and, beyond one moment’s question, recognized the fact that the expectations which had been awakened had been to the full justified, that a new man of mark was now added to those already in the popular branch of the Legislature.

“Before the year of his first entrance into the House of Commons had run out, Mr. Lowe had won for himself an official position. In the December of 1852, he was appointed one of the joint Secretaries of the Board of Con-

trol, on the formation by Lord Aberdeen of the Coalition Government. That post he occupied until the February of 1855, when the responsibilities of the Premiership were transferred, as with a sense of relief to everybody, himself included, from the hands of the Earl of Aberdeen to those of Viscount Palmerston." \*

It seems, however, that Mr. Cobden, who had carefully observed Mr. Lowe's opening career, did not form so high an opinion of his powers as did others. In 1857, when some of the electors of Manchester were thinking of asking Mr. Lowe to be a candidate for that borough, Mr. Cobden advised them to see and hear that gentleman first. "I have heard him," he said, "and I will say this, and in saying it I shall be borne out by any impartial man in the House of Commons—that, considering he had some reputation for ability at Oxford, and as a writer in the *Times*, he is the most conspicuous failure in the House of Commons."

In 1855 Mr. Lowe became Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Paymaster of the Forces, under Lord Palmerston—being at the same time sworn in as a Privy Councillor. After the retirement of the Palmerston Government, Mr. Lowe had the personal experience of being mobbed by his own constituency of Kidderminster, after which he withdrew from that representation and sat in Parliament nearly ten years for Calne, a nomination borough since extinguished by the Reform Bill of 1867. From 1859 to 1864 he held office again, under Lord Palmerston, being President of the Board of Health and Vice-President

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\* "The Gladstone Government," p. 180.

of the Education Board of the Privy Council. These offices he voluntarily resigned.

"From his first entrance upon office, men found in Mr. Lowe the most uncompromising and independent of officials. Not until 1863, however, did the irritation which he everywhere aroused rise to the dimensions of a storm. At that time he filled the office of Vice-President of the Council, and the clamor against him was terrific. For he had shown himself a man who knew no such thing as expediency ; who recognized no possibility of anybody being right who differed from himself ; and who displayed a disregard of the ordinary amenities of political life hardly to be expected in one who was a Member of Parliament, a Privy Councillor, and an official of some years' standing." \*

It was not, however, until 1866 that Mr. Lowe became really distinguished in the House of Commons. "Mr. Lowe had achieved a certain degree of social reputation before that time ; but he had not risen to more than a secondary position in Parliament and in Administration. A vote of the House of Commons had compelled him to retire from office towards the close of Lord Palmerston's last Ministry ; and in the reconstruction of the Government by Lord Russell Mr. Lowe was not included. He was therefore free as an independent member to resist to the uttermost the Reform Bill of 1866, and he did so with an eagerness, a brilliancy, and an effect which made him the Parliamentary hero of the day. The success was the success of a single session ; nothing in Mr. Lowe's previous career had given any promise of the faculties which he then

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\* "Cabinet Portraits," p. 40.

displayed ; nothing that he has done since has exhibited the same powers of debate. 'Single-speech Hamilton,' who was a very able man, and made some ordinarily good speeches besides the one which has earned him his name, has a sort of parallel in single-session Lowe. There have been painters, usually not much above mediocrity, who seem to have scaled the heights of genius in a single picture ; poets, ordinarily only second or third rate, whom a solitary ode or sonnet has lifted to the level of the masters of song. The year 1866 gives Mr. Lowe a place among Parliamentary orators. For the first, and for the only time in his life, he was in sympathy with the majority of his audience. He spoke from strong feelings to strong feelings. He was carried away by hate, scorn, and terror of the Reform proposals of 1866, of their authors, and of the classes whose enfranchisement was promised ; and these feelings were shared by nearly the whole of the Tory party, and by large numbers of the nominal supporters of the Government. He was the orator of a crisis of anger, distrust, and fear. It is curious that an enlargement of the franchise, far wider than any which he denounced, should have made him, for the first time, when close upon sixty, a member of the Cabinet, holding one of the greatest offices of the State ; and should have relieved him from the burden of lordly patronage to which he had consented to owe his seat in the House of Commons. Mr. Lowe exchanged a small nomination borough for the University of London in the interval between his resignation of the Vice-Presidency of the Committee of Council in Lord Palmerston's Administration and his appointment to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in Mr. Gladstone's. The

Reform Bill of 1867 came between ; and household suffrage effected this deliverance ; but, like some slave populations, he ignorantly resisted his deliverer. Mr. Bright once expressed his gratitude to Mr. Lowe's patron, that whereas he might have sent his butler to the House of Commons, he had been kind enough to depute a great intellectual gladiator. Perhaps, in Mr. Lowe's rhapsodies over the glorious struggles of the two great aristocratic parties, of one of which he was content to be the retainer, and in his desire to uphold them against the incursions of a leveling democracy, there was something of the spirit of the servants' hall. Did he feel himself bound to represent his unfortunate rival, the disappointed butler ?

"Mr. Lowe has scarcely, perhaps, sustained during the past half-dozen years the political and oratorical reputation which he earned in the memorable year 1866. But he has maintained himself in a position far higher than that which had previously been assigned to him. The credit of the great displays of the Reform controversy remains with him ; and an indefinite reserve of power is attributed to him, which increases the attention and respect with which he is listened to. It has insured him an audience and has given him confidence."\*

"Good or indifferent," says one critical observer, "Mr. Lowe's speeches are of the class of oratory which is better when reported than when listened to \* \* \* Possibly, the outside public will find a difficulty in believing it, but it is nevertheless true that Mr. Lowe is a bashful speaker. When he comes to a point in his speech he seems half

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\* "Political Portraits," p. 47.

afraid that it will not succeed and see some way towards realizing his fears by hanging down his head and without jerking out the concluding portion of his sentence, uttered the sting generally lies in a few words more and frequently fails to reach one-half his object. He is certainly more afflicted with self-consciousness than in former nights when recumbent to his couch was a constant necessity, the spectacle of the Chancellor of the Exchequer holding whilst at head of his department, which is rather generally the wrong place at times—intensely conscious of it, quoting figures and immediately uttering his conclusions, was a spectacle not calculated to engender either confidence or pleasure. Mr. Lowe's manner of answering questions was worse than to answer the House, whose repetition palled upon the speaker. If the question might be answered by the ministerial yes or no, yes was the 'no' was the full extent of Mr. Lowe's answer. Essentially a combative man, he threw a challenge in an answer relating to the tax on agricultural horses, and implied his scorn of mankind generally in a statement touching the legacy duty. Like the 'noble peasant,' sung by Crabbe,

'Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid,  
At no man's questions Isaac looked dismayed.'

Unfortunately we cannot continue the quotation, and add to the description of Mr. Lowe,

'Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,  
Cheerful he seemed and gentleness he loved;  
To bliss domestic he his heart resigned,  
And with the firmest had the fondest mind.'

One thing should be added to his credit, that he had a wholesome contempt for purposeless talk, and once horrified a number of estimable gentlemen who had occupied a whole night in a discussion on a forthcoming Budget by curtly promising to consider their 'interesting conversation,' and so resuming his seat. They thought they had been 'debating,' and have probably never forgiven the scornful Chancellor of the Exchequer for reminding them that they were only conversing." \*

Another critic has pointed out, in respect to the Parliamentary oratory of Mr. Lowe, "that, when least in harmony with public opinion, his fame as an orator has been most conspicuously in the ascendant. The multitude out of doors, the Members within the walls of Parliament, have seemed to take a perverse enjoyment in listening to over-night, or reading next morning, speeches of Mr. Lowe's, with which not another soul in the three kingdoms could anywhere be found to agree, but for the mother-wit, the terse and nervous eloquence, the subtle irony, the ingenious logic, the elegant scholarship, the daring paradoxes, and the rhetorical artifices of every kind woven into the warp and weft, of which everybody, in any way capable of appreciating them, had but one feeling, and that—admiration." †

Earl Russel, describing his difficulties with his Reform Bill in 1865-6, thus describes the party of which Mr. Lowe was then the leader ;

"Our whole course, however, was disturbed by the

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 90.

† "The Gladstone Government," p. 187.

formation of a party which aimed, not so much at the improvement of a Reform Bill, as the defeat of the Ministry. They owe the name by which they are known to the wit of Mr. Bright, who likened them to the occupiers of the Cave of Adullam. The band may be said to have been divided into three columns or gangs, the first consisting of the selfish, the second of the timid, and the third of those who were both selfish and timid. They had a leader who, like the Achitophel of Dryden, was

‘Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit.’

Of him, as of Achitophel—supposing his object was to destroy the Ministry—it might also be said—

‘To further this, Achitophel unites  
The malcontents of all the Israelites ;  
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,  
For several ends to serve the same design.’

There were, no doubt, some honest men in the Cave of Adullam ; but, upon the whole, I have never, in my long political life, known a party so utterly destitute of consistent principle or of patriotic end ; they were indifferent to the state of the suffrage, or the disfranchisement of boroughs, provided their own selfish objects were attained.

“When these bandits, uniting themselves to the Tories, had put the Government in a minority, the Cabinet thought it right to offer their resignation. It was not that they could not bear a defeat on a detail of the Reform Bill, but that it was obvious that the band of Adullam would never be satisfied till, by wiles and stratagems, they had driven the Ministry from office.

"Of the three gangs which issued from the Cave of Adulam, the timid inspire pity, the selfish indignation, the timid and selfish contempt." \*

On the formation of Mr. Gladstone's Government in December, 1868, Mr. Lowe became Chancellor of the Exchequer, but was transferred, in 1873, to the position of Home Secretary, and retired with Mr. Gladstone, in 1874. He has been less known in the United States, probably, through his political career than through his attacks on the English University system. These attacks, coming from a man trained under that system, have had rather more weight than the peculiarities of Mr. Lowe's temperament quite justified. The critic of the London *Daily News* thus analyzes his position on this point :

"Mr. Lowe is always bewailing the faultiness of his education, and the hindrances to which, as a mistaught, and in essential points an untaught man, he has been exposed in his political career. Instead of being apprenticed to a respectable trade, or sent to some school of the applied arts, as of civil engineering, it was his misfortune to be well grounded in Latin and Greek, to go to Oxford, to win prizes and scholarships, to take a first-class degree, and to become a fellow and tutor of his college. A young man thus neglected, or suffered to throw himself away upon dead languages, is, in his view, a melancholy object. Mr. Lowe is certainly an instance that the ingenuous arts do not always refine the character, and that humane letters may leave a man something of a savage. If the fault he finds with the process is due to imperfect satisfaction in his own

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\* "Recollections and Suggestions," by John, Earl Russell, p. 237.

case with the result, there may be some agreement with him. But the truth is, that Mr. Lowe is an instance not of the effect of classical training on the mind and character, but of the failure of such training to exercise its natural effect. His scholarship, minute and elegant as it is, is rather an acquirement held by a certain external tenure, a something annexed to him from without, an ornament hung about him, than a germ sown within the mind, assimilating nutriment there, and growing and bringing forth fruit. Knowledge has not with him been transformed into wisdom. His acquaintance with the poets, orators, historians, and philosophers of Greece and Rome has supplied him with illustrations and parallels for the adornment of his speeches ; but the essential thought thus attired is usually thin and poor. Mr. Lowe does not seem to be mentally richer for the rich mines in which he has worked. The barbarian is adorned with pearls and gold, but he is still a barbarian. 'The coltish nature breaks at seasons through the gilded pale.' Mr. Lowe's acquirements are those of an Oxford don, or of a Scotch Dominie of the narrower order, and might have suited well enough, though they would not have best suited, the chair at Glasgow to which he once aspired.

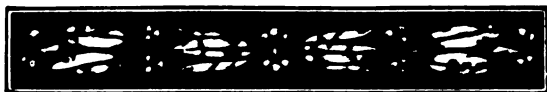
"An American humorist has apologetically remarked that there is a good deal of human nature in most men. It is Mr. Lowe's misfortune that there is very little human nature in him, and that what there is, is not of the best sort. This fact explains what Mr. Disraeli once described as his extraordinary faculty of spontaneous aversion. He starts from and grows enraged at samples of human nature which are foreign to him, like a dog or a horse which

barks or shies at some inexplicable portent. He thinks they mean mischief. They come from some unknown world, and are much more likely to be 'goblins damned' than 'spirits of health.' Mr. Gladstone's 'flesh and blood' argument for the suffrage drove him into transports of passion. Mr. Lowe is an exceedingly acute half of a man; but his mental and moral organization is incompletely developed; and the language which appeals to the missing half is so much empty rhapsody or meaningless gibberish. This defect, which has deprived his consummate scholarship of any humanizing influence, and of the large and considerate wisdom which are its proper fruits, and made his attainments but as the ample knowledge of an elderly schoolboy, has left the varied training of life as little productive. Mr. Lowe, disappointed of the Glasgow chair of Greek, left the cloister for the world; Oxford for Australia. He was engaged in public and Parliamentary affairs at the Antipodes, before he entered the English House of Commons, and took a fourth-rate place in Lord Aberdeen's Government. It is remarkable, and it is at once the cause and sign of that perpetual immaturity of mind and character, that eternal hobblehoyhood which marks him, that Mr. Lowe's experience of the world, like his acquaintance with books, seems never to have been assimilated by him. They have never blended with each other into the Ulysses-like wisdom of a man who has 'seen and known cities of men, and manners, climates, councils, governments,' and become 'a part of all that he has met.' Mr. Lowe has always been, and, at sixty and over, he still is the sprightly, traveled, too well informed youth, with a ready answer, often pert and shallow, for his betters,

and a contempt for everything which in feeling and thought goes deeper than he does. He is rather a nondescript personage in the House of Commons. He is a reader of Plato, and he perhaps recollects in one of the dialogues a description of an ambiguous class of persons who stand on the border territory between philosophers and statesmen without being either one or the other, and who, having a modicum of philosophy and a modicum of statesmanship, think themselves better than both philosophers and statesmen, though they are really inferior to them, fancying that they hold the first place while occupying only the third. This class of people, says Plato, are never so happy as when they can hold philosophers up to contempt as good for nothing. The impertinences with which Mr. Lowe favored Mr. Mill in the last Parliament, recall some passages of this description ; and his attitude to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, on the other hand, completes the likeness. Mr. Lowe may see himself in the sketch. 'Veluti in speculum.' " \*

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\* " Political Portraits," p. 41.



## XVI.

### SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.



“**S**IR WILLIAM HARCOURT,” wrote lately the London correspondent of an American newspaper,\* “is at this moment the most unpopular man in England; but he will, I dare say, survive his unpopularity. It is a pity to make so much of him.” Unluckily the unpopularity is an old story, as is that anecdote growing from it, of the four men who agreed that each should bring the most disagreeable man of his acquaintance to dine at a London club; Sir William Harcourt finally making his appearance as the invited guest of each. It is not probable, however, that the imputation of personal unpopularity would disturb the individual in question, so long as no one impeached his ability, and this, at least, is not to be doubted.

“It is no exaggeration,” says *Fraser’s Magazine*,† “to say that there is only one gentleman who has entered Parliament within the last decade who has succeeded in securing anything like a distinguished position, and whose

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\* “*New York Nation*,” Feb. 11, 1875.      † October, 1874.

presence would be missed if he were to quit it next Session—Sir William Harcourt.”

Sir William George Granville Vernon-Harcourt was born October 14, 1827. He is the second son of Rev. W. Vernon-Harcourt, and grandson of the late Archbishop of York. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated with high honors in 1851. He was called to the bar in 1854, and became a Queen's Counsel in 1866. In 1868 he was returned to Parliament for Oxford, having previously distinguished himself as the author of a series of articles in the London *Times* signed *Historicus* and relating to the American civil war and to international law. In 1869 he was elected Professor of International Law at Cambridge University. In 1873 he became Solicitor-General and was knighted, being thenceforth known as Sir William Harcourt instead of Vernon Harcourt as before. He went out of office with Mr. Gladstone's administration in February, 1874.

“Sir William Harcourt has the Parliamentary advantages of a commanding presence, a good voice, and very little practice at the bar. No one hearing him speak would guess that he is a lawyer, much less a Queen's Counsel. His gestures are few, and, though not eloquent, they are at least unobtrusive. He is a scholarly man and a wit, and there are cast about in the speeches he has delivered in the House as many ‘good things’ as will be found in an equal number of average orations by far more celebrated speakers. The pity of it is that he has never succeeded in impressing the House with a belief in his sincerity. Rightly or wrongly, he has ever been regarded as a piece-hunter, and when, during the *Manilla* crisis

in the Session of 1873, he had made a damaging speech, Mr. Disraeli took all the sting out of it by slyly observing that he 'did not know whether the House was yet to regard the observations of the hon. member for Oxford as carrying the weight of a Solicitor-General.' In the same way some of his most epigrammatic sentences miss fire because, whilst they are put forth as being impromptu, the House insists upon detecting about them the smell of the lamp. Another reason why his *bon mots* do not have the success their literary merit demands is that Sir W. Harcourt is so moved with his own humor that he indulges in an involuntary chuckle by way of preface, and after he has safely delivered his precious charge gets over an awkward pause that thereupon occurs by an unmusical noise like a prolonged A-a-a-a- ——. In a long speech he is apt to grow heavy - or perhaps only appears so from the fact that he is expected to be uniformly smart, and 'brevity is the soul of wit.' It is in a short, sharp attack, a lively diversion interposed in the jousts between the thunderous encounters of the Achilles and the Hector of debate that Mr. Vernon Harcourt has shone in times past, and in becoming 'Sir William Harcourt' he adventurously abandoned the primitive but proved sling and stone for the cumbrous armor and the unaccustomed spear. \* \* \* \*

"A commanding figure, a good voice, a sarcastic style, a happy gift of phrase-making, a fund of general reading, and a lawyer-like faculty of mastering a brief at an hour's notice combined to make him a Parliamentary speaker decidedly above the average. Somebody trying to define pleasure has said it consists chiefly in surprise. Of this also Mr. Vernon Harcourt had taken count, and till by

repetition the thing palled upon the accustomed palate, the House of Commons had the 'pleasure' of hearing a professed Liberal, after having paid some compliments to his chiefs, suddenly turn upon them and in bitter words denounce their course of procedure. No one knew for certain when Mr. Vernon Harcourt rose to speak in debate which side he would espouse, a circumstance that of itself lent an interest to his interposition, and the excitement was cleverly kept up by the ostentatiously impartial manner in which the speaker alternately administered praise and blame. An able man who professes himself 'independent' in the House of Commons is like one standing in the center of a poised plank on either end of which a child sits. By the slightest motion one way or the other the center figure can sway the ends at his pleasure ; and similarly a skillful speaker in an assembly divided by a sharp party line can move it to applause which shall be continuous and in the aggregate general." \* \* \* \*

"It was Mr. Vernon Harcourt's misfortune, that he was, with unusual promptitude and unanimity, 'found out,' or at least the House thought it had 'found him out,' which for all practical purposes amounts to the same thing. At the period indicated, which specially includes the Session of 1873, it was understood that the object of the hon. and learned gentleman's ambition was the Solicitor-Generalship, and it was a matter of common occurrence for reference to be openly made in debate to the existence and pressure of this motive. At the close of the Session the coveted prize was within his grasp, but its possession proved almost illusory, leaving him only a knight's title to convince him that it had not been a dream. At the open-

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ing of the Session of 1874 he was 'Sir William Harcourt, with a seat on the front Opposition bench, and in contact with circumstances that suggested the passage of a cycle since the days when Vernon Harcourt sat below the gangway opposite and twitted 'my right hon. friend at the head of 'the Government.' Here was a collapse of a great scheme, and just when the patient private had struggled out of the ranks, and had his place and his cocked hat to ride with the staff! What was to be done? There were two courses open to him. He might throw in his lot with his colleagues, wear their uniform, do sentry work on the front Opposition bench, go out under fire when ordered, vote with the Whip, and in due time, when the tide turned, cross over to the Treasury bench once more as Solicitor-General, with the certain prospect of the reversion of a judgeship as the reward of faithful service. Or he might fling off his allegiance to his chief, deliberately renounce his chances of promotion when Mr. Gladstone should come back to office, and, defying his old patron, play double or quits with Fortune. After some hesitation, and partly urged on by circumstances, Sir W. Harcourt has decided upon the latter course."\*

"Sir William Harcourt," says Mr. Escott in *Fraser's Magazine*, † "has modeled his declamatory style very closely after the example of the Tory chief. When the late Solicitor-General entered Parliament, it was said that his peculiar mission was to demolish Mr. Disraeli. One cannot help being reminded of Androcles and the lion. When the king of beasts was let loose into the arena, for

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," pp. 139, 239, 242.

† October, 1874.

the purpose of devouring his victim, the spectators were much disappointed at seeing the grateful animal tranquilly lick the hands and fawn at the feet of its former liberator. So it has been with Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Disraeli. Instead of attacking the then leader of the Opposition, 'Historicus,' on his entry into the House of Commons, turned round upon his own party, and in set phrases, which displayed a very close and careful study of Mr. Disraeli's most vituperative harangues, imputed all manner of inaptitudes and offenses to the occupants of the Treasury Bench. The next thing which the world heard of Sir William Harcourt was, that he was a frequent guest of Mr. Disraeli at Hughenden; and in a remarkable speech which he made at the Oxford dinner on New Year's Day, he produced a very accurate parody of Mr. Disraeli at his best."

Accordingly, the *Nation* correspondent thinks, "The Tories do not know how to act. They see in Sir W. Harcourt the sort of politician of which their Prime Minister was the prototype, and many of them think that he is just the man for them, and that Mr. Disraeli's strength is waning. But they cannot yet make up their minds to beckon him over to their side. The outside world look on with interest and amusement at the divergence, and wonder how it will end. On the whole, they feel inclined to put their money on the skillful player—to the extent, at least, of backing him not to draw a blank."\*

The London *Spectator* has lately christened Sir William Harcourt "a Liberal Disraeli," and has summed up his career as that of "a man who, in six short years of Parlia-

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\* New York *Nation*, Jan. 28, 1875. London correspondence (Jan. 1).

mentary life, has not only attained the position of the Solicitor-General of his party, but who has come to be vaguely discussed as a possible leader of the Liberals in case of Mr. Gladstone's retirement. Indeed, though the testimonials of fitness for that post which have been given him have mostly proceeded from high Tories like the Marquis of Bath, and though he owes to the duly grateful, and perhaps not quite disinterested, panegyrics of Mr. Disraeli at least as much as he owes to the success he has achieved as the spokesman of what he himself, we think, once called 'the Common-sense party' of Liberals, there can be no doubt that he has really made a great stride towards political influence, especially during the last Session, when he took up the cry that the Act of Uniformity should be strictly enforced on the State Church, and accompanied this demand with such eloquent denunciations of the Ritualists as earned for him Sir Wilfrid Lawson's happy sobriquet of 'the new Melancthon,' who had appeared to support Mr. Disraeli in his difficult impersonation of the character of a new Luther. Probably, indeed, no Liberal has gained so much in the last Session as Sir William Harcourt. We ourselves have noted his career from the first with a considerable, though not always, perhaps, a favorable interest, and we should say of him that if ever the Liberal party were to fall into the state of helpless and headless imbecility in which Mr. Disraeli found the Conservatives after the split with Sir Robert Peel, Sir William Harcourt might very well become its leader, and would bring to the task closely corresponding qualities of character and brain to those which made Mr. Disraeli great. Oddly enough, it was commonly reported on his first elec-

tion for the City of Oxford that he regarded it as his Parliamentary mission 'to put down Disraeli.' If that rumor had any basis of fact in it, Sir William Harcourt has indeed acted the part of Balaam towards the foe he was expected to curse, and has blessed him altogether. And doubtless, there was a natural sympathy between the men which rendered it hardly possible for Sir William Harcourt not to admire the great democratic educator of the Tory party. Indeed, Sir William Harcourt has frequently shown great qualities of the Disraeli kind. He has real wit and real audacity. He has a great faculty for *ad captandum* cries, and treats politics, like Mr. Disraeli, rather as a great game at which bold players may win high stakes, than as a region in which great causes are fought out. He is proud of his complete mastery of the various avenues to the imagination of English Philistinism, and hardly ever goes wrong in detecting the points at which Liberal principles are positively disliked by the great majority of Liberal voters. Early in his career, for instance, he discovered that the proposal for which Mr. Fawcett has fought so earnestly and so pertinaciously, to throw the expenses of elections on the constituencies themselves, was not one at all congenial either to the rate-payer as such, or even to the voter as such, since English voters very seldom wish to facilitate the election of men of their own class, much preferring to lay the well-to-do, who can spend something in the service, under obligations to them; and no sooner had he detected this than the plan of throwing election expenses on the rates received his strenuous opposition.

"Indeed, in this respect—in the diagnosis of electoral feelings,—we should regard Sir William Harcourt as greatly

Mr. Disraeli's superior, and for a very obvious reason, that he is a genuine Anglo-Saxon himself, while Mr. Disraeli's insight into the predilections of English constituencies comes entirely of acute observation of feelings to which he himself is for the most part a stranger. Sir William Harcourt has in this way even more than Mr. Disraeli's sympathy for the latent Conservatism of 'the residuum.' And no one can give that sort of Conservatism happier expression. When he told the people of Oxford that he loved the Established Church because 'he owed all that was best and dearest to him in life to a youth spent in an English country parsonage,' he put these Conservative feelings in the very form in which English audiences like best to hear them put. Again, the Liberal causes to which he most attaches himself are equally well chosen for the same purpose. Nothing could be better than his protest, on Wednesday night, against a policy of enclosure which might end in making almost all Englishmen trespassers whenever they go off the high-roads. His opposition to the Parks Bill, in which he fought an unequal fight against Mr. Ayrton—unequal only because he was so careless in getting up his case against a most able and accurate opponent—was conceived in the same spirit. Sir William Harcourt understands to the bottom the sort of annoyances which most gall the pride of an average Englishman, and that disposition to bluster which injuries to such a pride always produce. Nothing could be more skillful after its kind than the way in which he, last Session, lectured the clergy on their wish to be above the law, and laid down magniloquent commonplaces on the sacredness of that law. He has the key to the heart of the average Englishman's not

very earnest, but somewhat bounceable, Liberalism. No one will ever find him undertaking 'heroic' legislation for Ireland, or pushing on any legislation with Mr. Gladstone's painfully conscientious sense of what is due to his pledges and his own high resolves. If Sir William Harcourt were ever to come to the top, he would be a leader with qualities about half-way between the less serious aspects of Lord Palmerston's character and the most plausible aspects of Mr. Disraeli's. A far cleverer speaker than Lord Palmerston ever was, Sir William Harcourt would yet never throw that great force of personal interest and volition into politics which Lord Palmerston threw into his Foreign-Office work. He would be content to amuse us with such Sphinx-like sayings as those of which Mr. Disraeli has, as it were, the patent, though the pupil has sometimes been almost equal to the master—as when he told his constituents that 'Patience is the secret of politics, for *time is the artificer of nations.*' But of the oratory of deep conviction, we need never look for much from Sir William Harcourt. With great knowledge of the world, great satirical powers, plausibility *ad libitum*, and as much good sense as is produced by a bright intellect without much accuracy or industry, Sir William Harcourt might lead with great success a party which happened to dislike 'earnestness,' and preferred to earn a superficial popularity.

"That we ourselves do not look to the possibility of such a leadership with any very great satisfaction will be evident enough. It so happens that, during this century at least, the Liberal leader has almost always been a man of deeper and warmer convictions than his opponent, though, to all

appearance, Lord Melbourne may have been an exception. Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, even Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone—these were all men who, whatever their faults, had in them a kind of grim earnestness of their own. Lord Palmerston may have lost this to some extent toward the close of his life ; nay, he always took political life more easily, appeared to take it less to heart than any of the others. But even he, when opposed to Mr. Disraeli, seemed a man pitted against a voice. Sir William Harcourt is unquestionably nearer to the Disraeli type—evinces less of heartiness in his politics, and a far greater taste for claptrap and bounce than any leader to whom the English Liberals have been recently accustomed. If he were ever to secure for himself the succession to Mr. Gladstone—which, by his good luck, some years hence might possibly happen—the event would mark a very serious decadence in the tone of the Liberal party. \* \* \* A politician so clever as he may rise to any eminence, if the temporary mind of the country and of the Parliament happens to be in sympathy with him. But the transition, if it should ever occur, from Mr. Gladstone to Sir William Harcourt, would be a fearfully sudden descent from intensity of purpose to no purpose at all. And yet, perhaps, no one would ‘educate’ the Liberal party to submit to the Conservative prejudices of a half-educated democracy more skillfully than Sir W. Harcourt.”



## XVII.

### MR. GOSCHEN.



“**L**IKE that of Sir W. Harcourt, the candidature of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Childers is not to be seriously discussed at the present juncture. Their time may come, but it is not yet. Both right honorable gentlemen have succeeded in establishing a character as able administrators, and as debaters not to be scorned in a pitched battle. But neither has shown himself gifted with the heaven-born genius that made Pitt's accession to the Premiership in his twenty-fourth year appear a natural sequence of the occurrence of a vacancy ; and neither is of sufficiently long standing to claim promotion by right of seniority or service. During the Session of 1874, Mr. Goschen startled the House by appearing, for one night only, in quite a new character. When in office, and indeed on ordinary occasions, he addresses the House in a timid, half apologetical manner, and in language which

well beseems his mien. On the night when the last stage of the Licensing Bill was reached, it being apparently his turn to speak for 'the party,' he attacked the Government in general and the Home Secretary in particular in a lively, bitter, and sarcastic speech, which was really in very good style, and would have done credit to Mr. Lowe himself. It is true that the effect was somewhat marred by the right honorable gentleman's holding his hat with one hand behind his back as he spoke, sedulously standing clear of the table, and presenting on the whole an appearance of nervous preparation for instant flight that suggested the cherishing of a design to put on his hat and make a run for it as soon as he had said all that was on his mind. But the speech was emphatically a good one, and created in the minds of hearers not only surprise but expectation." \*

"Mr. Goschen," says the same critic elsewhere, "is a speaker of the Cardwell school, though here the mournful manner is changed for a somewhat timid, anxious, half apologetical air. He has a curious trick when addressing the House of holding himself by the lappets of the coat, as if otherwise he might run away and leave matters to explain themselves. Sometimes he changes the action and, apparently having the same object in view, holds himself firmly down by the hips. When not thus engaged he is nervously sorting the papers before him, or clawing at the air with the forefinger of his right hand. He has a peculiar voice, which does not gain additional charm from the prevalence of a tone suggestive of a perpetual cold in the head. Like [those of] Mr. Cardwell, his speeches read better than

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 249.

they sound, for he, too, has great business capacity, and possesses the power of marshaling intricate facts and figures in a manner that makes dark places clear." \*

"Mr. Goschen," says *Fraser's Magazine*,† "is rapidly becoming an acute and formidable critic. His delivery is faulty—he mouths too much. His action is violent, without being effective; and he has contracted the same vicious habit as that which is so signally exemplified in Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, of assailing the table when he is desirous to lend additional emphasis to his words."

"The Right Honorable George Joachim Goschen was born on the 10th of August, 1831. He is the son of a London merchant, of German origin. Mr. Goschen's grandfather is understood to have been a publisher of Leipzig. His father, the London merchant just referred to, was the late William Henry Goschen, Esq., of Austin-friars and Roehampton. As a schoolboy, the President of the Poor-Law Board was educated at Rugby, under Dr. Tait, now the ninety-second Archbishop of Canterbury. As a stripling, he went to Oriel College, Oxford, where in 1853, as first class in classics, he greatly distinguished himself, finding some difficulty in graduating, solely by reason of certain scruples of conscience in regard to the oath administered. Married, in 1857, to Lucy, daughter of John Dalley, Esq., Mr. Goschen—without any thought of having a political career opened to him within a very few years afterwards, and certainly never dreaming, at the time, that before he should be thirty-six he would have

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 108.

† October, 1874.

taken his seat in the inner circle of the Government as a Cabinet Minister, and have been sworn in as one of her Majesty's Privy Counsellors—settled down in the city of London, to all appearance permanently, as a man of business. He became a member of the firm of Fruhling and Goschen, in Austinfriars. From that establishment he eventually retired altogether, at the beginning of 1866, on his becoming a member of Earl Russell's last Administration. Statesmanship and Commerce were apparently deemed by him to be incompatible.

“Before then, however, he had made his mark in the mercantile world as a thoroughly representative City-man, using that phrase with no reference whatever to the fact of his having been, since the May of 1863, one of the four members returned by the City of London to the House of Commons. As a theoretical financier, he was already noticeable, before his entrance into the House of Commons, in his capacity, namely, as the author of a treatise entitled the ‘Theory of Foreign Exchange’—a treatise which has already run through several editions, and which has long since come to be regarded, upon monetary matters, as an authority. The ability displayed by Mr. Goschen, first of all, in his brilliant academic career, and afterwards as the writer of a work like the one just now particularized, a work at once abstruse and practical, but above all, through the clear-headedness revealed by him within the knowledge of City-men in his character as a practical man of business, is, at the date last mentioned, namely, in the May of 1864, his name being put forward, upon a death vacancy, for the representation of the metropolis, as the ca

“So favorable an impression had he produced, even then, in his private capacity upon that constituency—a constituency, moreover, not very readily satisfied in regard to an entirely new candidate’s antecedents—that he was at once returned. He has been returned as M. P. for the City of London, ever since, by a series of reëlections—by a reëlection in 1865, by another in 1866, and by another in 1868, sending him to the top of the poll as the first of the four representatives. Partly through his personal energy, partly through his unmistakable intelligence, but partly also by reason of his being the representative—as one may say, the picked commercial and financial representative—of a great constituency like that of the metropolis, the attention of the leaders of party was directed especially to Mr. Goschen, and that, too, with such happy results for himself that, when he had been only a year and a half in the House, he was appointed to an office of no less importance and prominence than that of Vice-President of the Board of Trade. In that office he had been barely a couple of months, however—that is, from the 20th of November, 1865, to the 26th of January, 1866—when, at the latter date, he was elevated to a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and sworn in as a member of the Privy Council. So rapid a rise as this was almost, if it be not entirely, without precedent. It was regarded by many in the House as a something quite out of the range of its collective experience.”\*

“When Earl Russell,” says Justin McCarthy, in a passage already quoted, “two or three years ago, raised Mr.

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\* “The Gladstone Government,” p. 323.

career, which he at once discovered and commenced, in Australia. Immediately upon his arrival in those 'fresh fields and pastures new,' he became a member of the then recently established Government of Victoria.

"That independent Government had been called into existence by an Act passed in the Imperial Parliament during the session of 1850, the session just concluded when Mr. Childers set forth on his voyage to Australia. The enactment referred to, 13 & 14 Vict. cap. 59. For the Better Government of Her Majesty's Australian Colonies forming the Colony of Victoria bestowed upon that portion of our antipathetic possessions the priceless boon of a Representative Constitution. It also fully empowered the legislative body to levy customs, duties, and taxes of other descriptions.

"In the inauguration of this new Government, Mr. Childers, young though he was, had a very conspicuous share, both as an administrator and as a legislator. He was a member of the very first Cabinet formed in Victoria, and he was also one of the popular representatives in the very first Legislative Assembly which was there convened. His office in the Cabinet was that of Commissioner of Trade and Customs. His seat in the Victorian Legislature was as Member for Portland. That constituency he represented in 1856 and 1857. His Ministerial position he held, however, not simply during two, but during as many as six years, altogether, namely, from 1851, the year of his arrival in Victoria, to the beginning of 1857, the date of his departure homewards. So that it has been with him, as it had previously been with his distinguished colleague, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had learnt

statesmanship in Australia before his entrance into the nobler arena of the Imperial Parliament.

“Mr. Lowe, it will be remembered, had returned to England in 1850, before Mr. Childers—his junior by sixteen years—had arrived, in 1851, in Australia. The former had been Member of Council for seven years, from 1843 to 1850; the latter had been for six years, that is, from 1851 to 1857, Member, as we have seen, of the first Cabinet. One had sat for two years (1848-1849) as Member for Sydney—one for two years (1856-1857) as Member for Portland. The Hon. Robert Lowe and the Hon. Hugh Childers returned homewards, each, in turn, laden with Australian experiences—the latter to take his seat in the British Cabinet eventually as First Lord of the Admiralty, the former as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Tutored in the same school, they have together won their way to high office for the first time in the same Government.

“It was in the character of Agent-General for the colony of Victoria that Mr. Childers, in 1857, arrived in England. Within a couple of years after his return he had obtained a seat in the House of Commons. He entered the House, for the first time, in the February of 1860, as the colleague of Mr. Monckton Milnes, the poet (since created Lord Houghton), having just then been elected one of the two representatives of the borough of Pontefract. His acquisition, thus, of a place in the legislature, was not accomplished, however, without some difficulty. He had unsuccessfully appealed to that same constituency in the April of 1859, but, having afterwards petitioned against the return, the sitting member resigned, a new writ was issued, and the future Cabinet Minister was elected, as we have

said, for the first time as M.P. for Pontefract. As member for that borough he has held his place in the House of Commons ever since then uninterruptedly. He was re-elected in the April of 1864, and again in the July of 1865, and now, more recently, twice in rapid succession, as we all know, namely, during the last General Election, and immediately afterwards on the abrupt change of Government.

“Within a year after his first entrance into the House, Mr. Childers was appointed, in 1861, Chairman of the Select Committee on Transportation. Two years afterwards he was gazetted as one of the Royal Commissioners instructed to inquire into laws relating to Penal Servitude: and four years later on, in 1867, was gazetted as a Royal Commissioner to investigate the Constitution of the Law Courts. It should be mentioned, in regard to his labors in connection with the earlier of these two Royal Commissions, that his individual recommendations, in respect to transportation, were eventually accepted and acted upon by Her Majesty's Government.

“Nearly five years have now elapsed since Mr. Childers, after a career of no more than four years in the House of Commons, was selected as worthy of office by the then Premier, Viscount Palmerston. He was, thereupon—this was in the April of 1864—appointed one of the Lords of the Admiralty—the very department over which he is now presiding as a Cabinet Minister. Continued in that appointment until the August of 1865, he was then removed to the position of Financial Secretary to the Treasury, a position which he continued to hold in the Government reconstructed by Earl Russell immediately upon the death of his predecessor in the Premiership. As Financial Sec-

retary to the Treasury Mr. Childers fully sustained and, so to speak, justified, the high reputation for administrative ability which he had brought back with him from Australia.

“His career, in the interim, outside the House of Commons, had been sufficiently active and energetic. In evidence of which, it may be here stated that, besides being the author of several vigorous pamphlets on Free Trade, on Railway Policy, and on National Education, he is the Chairman of the Great India Peninsular Railway Company, and a Director of four companies as considerable as the London and County Bank, the Bank of Australia, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, and the Liverpool, London, and Globe Insurance. Entered some years since as a student of Lincoln’s Inn, he has never yet been called to the Bar.” \*

The author of “Men and Manner in Parliament,” writing more than a year ago, pointed out the Marquis of Hartington as the probable successor of Mr. Gladstone, on the ground that among all the other probable candidates for the position there existed latent jealousies which could only be composed by the selection of some “broad bosom of respectable mediocrity upon which a dozen heads, aching with jealousy and burning with ambition, might peacefully repose. Mr. Forster would not consent to serve under Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Lowe would scorn to hold office under Mr. Forster. Mr. Goschen and Mr. Childers are as Damon and Pythias in friendly counsel and co-operation in naval affairs; but if one were called to lead the House of Commons the other must perforce be passed

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\* “The Gladstone Government,” p. 270.

over, and it would be difficult to convince him that the selection had been made wholly in accordance with that principle by the rigid adoption of which the world has, according to Mr. Darwin, reached its present state of perfection. The elevation of Lord Hartington to the titular Premiership would leave the ambitious youth of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry exactly as they now stand, with the exception of the removal of the figure in whose colossal shadow they have hitherto walked, like Gulliver's companions in Lilliput." \*

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\* "Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 254.

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